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Empty housing in England

A report on the 1977 Vacant Property Survey
carried out on behalf of the Department of the Environment

Margaret Bone and Val Mason

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Empty housing in England

A report on the 1977 Vacant Property Survey
carried out on behalf of the Department of the Environment
— a follow-up survey of vacant addresses identified
in the 1977 Labour Force Survey

Margaret Bone and Val Mason

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Much of the current interest in vacant accommodation centres on dwellings which could be, but are not, occupied — which are in some sense needlessly vacant — and a useful definition must take account of this*. Although some properties would be classed as 'vacant' according to any definition, the concepts 'needlessly vacant' or 'potentially occupiable' themselves raise a number of questions. For example, most enquiries exclude derelict property from the count of vacant accommodation, but how should a property, perhaps boarded-up, undergoing reconstruction be recorded? How should a flat attached to a shop but only used for storage purposes be classed? Is the home of a person in hospital without hope of discharge to be counted as occupied? And is a property occupied or vacant if the future occupants are moving in their belongings over a period of weeks or months? How should show houses be treated, or business flats currently unused by staff or visitors?

For the present survey of vacant accommodation, interviewers were given detailed instructions as to what was to be regarded as 'vacant' (See Appendix 1 for definitions given in the Vacant Property Survey.) In the Census, however, instructions to enumerators have been less explicit. Similarly those given to interviewers on the LFS and NDHS are brief† and, as a result, the decision about what is 'vacant' is left partly to the interviewer or enumerator. If instructions are open to different interpretations, inconsistencies in the identification of vacant housing are bound to occur.

As well as being more detailed than the NDHS or LFS instructions, the VPS definition differed in emphasis. The NDHS/LFS approach counts a property as vacant if no one is currently living there, while for the VPS the purpose was to identify property which was empty and might be available for occupation. Thus properties where the occupant was a long-stay hospital patient, for example, would have been counted as 'occupied' by VPS, as long as the bulk of personal belongings remained, but for the NDHS would have been counted as 'vacant'.

The definition and identification of 'derelict' properties is also likely to be a source of variation in estimates of the number of vacant properties. It is generally considered that derelict properties are not part of the nation's housing stock and so should not be counted as vacant dwellings. Hence traditionally in the Census, unoccupied dwellings which are considered by the enumerator to be derelict, or dilapidated and uninhabitable, are not enumerated. The principle of not counting 'derelicts' as

vacant is also followed on the LFS and NDHS*. All this however inevitably leads to the question of what is meant by 'derelict'? In both the Census and surveys, the answer is left largely to the judgement of the individual enumerator or interviewer. No definition of 'derelict' is given on the LFS or NDHS and not until the 1971 Census was some guidance given in instructions as to what was to be regarded as derelict. This is perhaps understandable as derelict properties are relatively few and are of peripheral, if any, concern to those enquiries. They are more important however when trying to estimate the number of dwellings that are vacant.

The distinction between what is 'derelict' and what might more usefully be classed 'vacant' is sometimes difficult to draw in practice. For example, in the 1971 Census, boarded-up buildings were treated as derelict and as such were not to be enumerated†. This probably reflects an assumption that most, if not all, boarded-up buildings at that time were due for demolition and not usefully counted as vacant housing stock. Nowadays it is apparent that some empty accommodation is boarded-up as a precaution against wilful damage or against squatters and is neither derelict nor due for demolition but may be awaiting renovation or reoccupation. Such properties should clearly be counted as vacant dwellings and included in the nation's total housing stock. Furthermore, it has been argued that some of the housing intended for eventual demolition but which might meanwhile be used as 'short-life' accommodation should also be included in counts of vacant dwellings.

For these reasons, all unoccupied properties, regardless of whether they were considered to be derelict or not at the time of the Labour Force Survey, were revisited for the Vacant Property Survey. Detailed information about their condition was then recorded and, from this, it is possible to estimate their likely condition at the time of the LFS**. In Section 1.6, an estimate of the number of derelict properties included in the survey is given and the relationship between being derelict and being lost to the housing stock is discussed.

From the above, it is clear that the reliable enumeration of vacancies is not possible unless the field force is given explicit definitions and instructions. However, the results of the present follow-up survey show unfortunately, that even then, the problem of identifying vacant properties is not completely solved. This is partly because few, if any, definitions can be sufficiently precise to rule out the possibility of misclassification in the field but, perhaps

* An interesting light on the way the view of vacant accommodation has changed in recent years is provided by 'The Housing Situation in 1960' report by P.G. Gray and P.G. Russell in which vacant accommodation was defined as that which was 'available for sale or let' (p105). Since it is widely held today that property is often vacant precisely because it is not being made available for occupation, this definition is no longer appropriate.

† See Appendix 2 for a summary of instructions given on '61 and '71 Censuses, NDHS and '75 and '77 LFS. In Appendix 3 are the full interviewers' instructions and documents pertaining to the identification of vacant property in the '77 LFS.

* Derelict properties were, however, included in the initial samples for both these surveys, in that zero-rated, low-rated properties and those 'Taken Out of Rating' (TORs) were sampled from rating lists. (See Appendix A4.2).

† More precisely, the instructions were 'Treat as derelict if the roof is partly or completely missing or if the doors are boarded up or are missing'. (See Appendix 2).

** The instructions given to VPS interviewers for identifying derelict properties are shown on the last page of the Accommodation Questionnaire, a copy of which is in Appendix 9 of this report.

more important, because it is often difficult and sometimes impossible to obtain all the information necessary to apply the definition. If enumerators fail to contact an occupant at an address, they have to rely on information given by neighbours or on the outward appearance of the property in order to decide whether or not it is vacant. If these sources of information are inconclusive or misleading, the wrong decision may be made.

In Appendix 4, it is shown that even when detailed instructions are given to interviewers and a variety of sources are consulted, there still remain some cases where it is not certain whether the properties are in fact vacant.

1.4 Estimating the number of vacant properties

The sample of vacant housing was, as mentioned above, identified from amongst addresses visited for the 1977 Labour Force Survey. The procedures involved are described in detail in Appendix 4. Briefly, interviewers revisited and checked addresses shown by the LFS to be possibly vacant. Those properties which proved to be unoccupied domestic accommodation, including ones which were boarded-up or derelict, were treated as vacant. Addresses identified as second homes or holiday lettings were not included as vacant.

Within its terms of reference, the Labour Force Survey enumerated 4.1% of household spaces as vacant. On closer examination of the LFS non-response records for the present enquiry, it was found that a total of 4.6% household spaces were either coded or described by LFS interviewers as vacant or derelict. The more detailed Vacant Property Survey follow-up found that only 3.0% of household spaces were in fact vacant or derelict*. If some allowance is made for the non-response in the Vacant Property Survey this estimate becomes 3.1% and 3.3% when other possible sources of error are taken into account. (See Appendix 4, Section A4.6). Thus, on the basis of the definitions used for the VPS, the number of vacant or derelict household spaces in England in the spring of 1977 is estimated to lie between 555,000 and 605,000. The corresponding estimate from the LFS is 770,000 vacant or derelict household spaces. (See Appendix 7 for grossing factor used to obtain national estimates).

Some of the difference is accounted for by the stricter definition applied for VPS. Nevertheless, the results of the follow-up investigation show clearly that the original LFS overestimated vacancies.

1.5 Reasons for the over-estimation of vacancies by the LFS

The reasons for this over-enumeration stem mainly from the fact mentioned earlier that other enquiries necessarily

devote less attention, than the VPS, to the verification of vacancies since they are primarily concerned with the occupants of occupied accommodation. In such enquiries interviewers are not provided with adequate definitions of vacant, second home, absent household and so on, to permit clear distinction to be made between the groups. Nor does an interviewer carry out exhaustive enquiries to establish into which non-response group a particular address at which she makes no contact with a household should be categorised. Appendix 4 gives a full account of reasons for over-enumeration by the LFS.

1.6 Derelict properties and the identification of losses to the housing stock.

As pointed out earlier, derelict or boarded up housing has in most censuses or surveys been omitted from estimates of the nation's housing stock.

From the VPS interviewers' classification of properties at the time of the follow-up, it is estimated that approximately 16% (or 90,000) vacant properties were probably 'derelict' at the time of the LFS (see Appendix A5.3). As explained in Section 1.3, however, the VPS information does not enable us to say which or exactly how many of vacant properties in the sample were 'derelict' when they were first visited for the LFS. Nevertheless, by relating the VPS interviewer's description of properties to what the owners at the time planned to do with them, we can show how well the labels 'derelict' and 'boarded up' identify accommodation lost to the housing stock, ie, that which is to be demolished or just left empty.

About a fifth of all vacant properties were still vacant and classified as 'derelict' and/or boarded up at the time of VPS and of these just over 40% were to be demolished and a little under 10% were to be left empty. Thus only half of those in the category had effectively been removed from the housing stock.

If only those classed as 'derelict' at the time of VPS are considered (about 14% of all the vacant properties), whether or not they were boarded up, then just over half were going to be demolished and, again, under 10% were to be left empty for the time being — a total of nearly 60% lost to the housing stock.

It is also relevant that about 20% of the 'derelict or boarded up' properties had been affected by building work at the time they were identified as vacant a few months earlier, and were therefore very unlikely to be permanently withdrawn from the housing stock. More surprisingly, 10% of the housing classed as 'derelict' was actually undergoing building work at the time the interviewers put it in the 'derelict' category.

Conversely, about one third of the vacant units which were going to be demolished were not classed as 'derelict'. It is therefore apparent that the labels 'derelict', but even more so 'derelict and/or boarded up' are rather unsatisfactory guides to properties lost from the housing stock.

* In the VPS, a 'vacant household space' is defined as living accommodation for one household or accommodation which is a single letting to be shared by more than one household. Most addresses (that is, rateable units) contain just one household space though a small number contain more than one.

1.7 Estimates of vacancies from the VPS and NDHS compared

In Appendix 5 the VPS estimates are compared with those from the NDHS, which was carried out in the autumn of 1977. The estimate derived from the NDHS is just over 600,000 vacant *dwellings*, but this excludes 137,000 derelict and boarded up properties which unlike those in the VPS were enumerated separately in the survey. Converting the VPS estimate in terms of 'household spaces' to one in terms of 'dwellings' is not straightforward. However the VPS results can be easily converted to 'wholly or partly vacant rateable units' which will give a reasonable approximation to vacant dwellings.

Accordingly, the VPS estimate of vacant or derelict rateable units, allowing for the possible under-enumeration mentioned above, is approximately 550,000 compared with about 750,000 vacant dwellings and derelict properties in the NDHS. Taking into account all the possible sources of error, including sampling errors, in the VPS figure, it is estimated that the actual number of vacant units lies between 500,000 and 600,000 and, given the VPS definition of 'vacant', it is very unlikely that the number lies outside these limits.

As explained more fully in Appendix 5, part of the difference between the VPS and NDHS estimates will be due to differences in definition and coverage. Nevertheless it seems clear from the evidence of the VPS that the NDHS over-estimated the number of vacant dwellings in the autumn of 1977.

1.8 Change in the number of vacant properties in England between 1971 and 1977

Comparison between the results of the NDHS and the 1971 Census has indicated that there was an increase in the number of vacant dwellings of about 100,000 between 1971 and 1977: for the 1971 Census 530,000 vacant dwellings were enumerated (excluding newly built vacant properties), compared with the NDHS result of about 610,000¹.

Other evidence suggesting an increase in the number of vacant properties is available from the English House Condition Surveys (EHCS) of 1971 and 1976. The definitions and procedures for these two surveys were similar so comparisons between them are more straightforward than between other enquiries. The estimate of the increase in the number of vacant dwellings derived from the EHCS between 1971 and 1976 is also about 100,000².

In the light of the VPS results discussed in Section 1.7, which suggest that the NDHS figure is probably an overestimate, the extent of the change in the number of vacant properties between 1971 and 1977 needs to be

reassessed. However, because of differences in definition and coverage between the various sources, the results of this assessment are somewhat inconclusive.

Certainly the Census figure itself is subject to some error. In the absence of evidence from any post-enumeration check of the 1971 Census in England, we shall assume that the level of error or mis-classification was similar to that found by the post-enumeration check of the 1971 Census carried out in Scotland. * Application of the results of the Scottish enquiry to the England Census figures gives a net reduction of about 26% in the estimate of the number of vacant dwellings (excluding those newly built), to around 410,000 compared with the original figure of 530,000. This revised figure excludes an estimate of those, in fact, occupied (12%), derelict (12%) or non-residential (1%) and includes possible vacant accommodation enumerated as 'absent household' (See Appendix 2.2).

As stated in Section 1.3, derelict properties were not to be enumerated in the Census and so to compare the Census and VPS estimates of vacant dwellings, derelict properties must be omitted from the VPS figure. From the information available, however, it is not clear whether the 90,000 derelict or the estimated 130,000 derelict and/or boarded properties should be excluded to make the estimate most comparable with that of the Census. The revised VPS figure therefore lies between 420,000 and 460,000.

So on the basis of these figures, and assuming that 'rateable units' may be taken as equivalent to 'dwellings', the increase between 1971 and 1977 in the number of vacant properties may be around 10,000 to 50,000. This difference is small and, moreover, is within the limits of sampling and other errors (see Section 1.4 above).

The Census figure, however, probably includes:

- a) some types of vacancies which were excluded by the VPS with its more precise definition (for example long-term absent households which could be counted as vacant even in the post-enumeration check on the Census).
- b) some brief vacancies lasting a day or so which are more likely to be identified by a census than a survey (see Section 1.2 above).

If these discrepancies occurred, the increase in vacant dwellings between the Census and the VPS would be greater than the 10,000 to 50,000 arrived at earlier.

Taken together with the evidence from other enquiries, the present analysis therefore indicates that the number of vacant dwellings in England has increased between 1971 and 1977, though the size of the increase is uncertain. It is clear, however, that the actual number of vacant dwellings in both 1971 and 1977 was lower than that

¹ Department of Environment *National Dwelling and Housing Survey*, HMSO, 1978. Chapter 2.

² Department of Environment, *Housing Policy*, Technical Volume Part I. HMSO, 1977, page 74.

* This assumption seems reasonably realistic as the check carried out on the sample Census in England in 1966 has similar results to those found in Scotland in 1971 (see Footnote 2 to this Chapter).

initially enumerated in the Census and the NDHS respectively.

1.9 Summary and conclusions

We have discussed here some of the differences which can be expected in the numbers of vacant properties enumerated in large-scale surveys, in a Census and in a detailed follow-up study such as the present Vacant Property Survey. The VPS suggests that, in general, large-scale surveys tend to over-enumerate vacant properties. There is also some evidence that a Census will do likewise though possibly not to the same extent. Errors in enumeration in such enquiries may be reduced if interviewers are given clear operational definitions and

non-response codes distinguishing between the groups of concern such as 'vacant', 'derelict', 'absent household', 'non-domestic accommodation' and so on.

Large-scale surveys, however, can yield estimates which provide a guide to the size of the vacancy problem and, moreover, these can be used to monitor trends in vacancy rates over time. The special advantage of an occasional detailed survey concerned only with vacant property lies in the information it gives about the characteristics and circumstances of vacancies which suggest how the numbers could be reduced. This information forms the subject of the remaining chapters of the report.

2 Which types of property are vacant?

2.1 Introduction

Other recent surveys¹ have indicated that vacancies are most likely to be found in properties built before 1919, in those lacking basic amenities and of low rateable value and also in accommodation of certain types, particularly non-purpose built flats. The proportions of vacant properties possessing all or only some of these attributes has not, however, been fully investigated. In this report we shall show which combinations of these and other attributes are disproportionately common amongst vacant rateable units.

In this chapter, vacant rateable units identified by the Vacant Property Survey (VPS) including, as mentioned earlier, any which may have been derelict, will be described in terms of their age, type and ownership — public or private. In each respect, the vacant properties will be compared with occupied housing in order to indicate the types of housing which are most likely to be vacant. In this way we shall begin to throw light on the reasons for vacancies.

In the final section of the chapter, we shall give estimates of vacancy rates for different types of housing. The regional distribution of vacant properties is described in an annex to the chapter.

The data for occupied housing will be taken from the results of the 1977 National Dwelling and Housing Survey (NDHS)². Both the NDHS and the Labour Force Survey (LFS) from which the vacant housing was identified are based on a 1/5% national sample of rateable units visited in 1977 and, as such, are suitable data sources for this analysis.

In the VPS less detail was obtained about separate household spaces within rateable units than by the NDHS which was mainly concerned with occupied housing. Results for vacant and non-vacant (ie. occupied) housing presented in this report will, therefore, be given in terms of rateable units rather than household spaces. This will not affect the conclusions to be drawn as the vast majority of rateable units consist of only one household space so results for either would be very similar.

The VPS did find out the numbers of household spaces in rateable units and we shall begin our comparison of

vacant and non-vacant properties by looking at this aspect of them.

2.2 The number of household spaces in rateable units

The VPS found that 96% of vacant rateable units contained just one household space (Table 2.1). The remaining 4% of vacant units contained more than one household space, accounting for 9% of all vacant household spaces. Most of these 'multi-household space' units were completely empty at the time of the LFS. A small number were only partly empty, that is, some household spaces in them were vacant but others were occupied. The numbers of vacant household spaces in both wholly and partly vacant rateable units are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.1 Vacant accommodation in rateable units containing one or more than one household.

Rateable units containing:—	Vacant rateable units		Vacant household spaces	
	No.	%	No.	%
A single household space	2,441	96	2,441	91
More than one h'ld space	114	4	238	9
all vacant	69	3	171	6
not all vacant	45	2	67	3
<i>Total sample in England</i>	<i>2,555</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2,679</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 2.2 Numbers of 'wholly' and 'partly' vacant rateable units and the number of vacant household spaces therein

Rateable units containing:—		'Wholly vacant' rateable units: all household spaces vacant	'Partly vacant' rateable units: not all household spaces vacant
1	vacant household space	2,441	39
2	" " "	48	2
3	" " "	13	2
4+	" " "	8	2
<i>Total sample of vacant rateable units</i>		<i>2,510</i>	<i>45</i>

The partly vacant rateable units will in general be excluded from results in this report. This is because most of the information collected about them is not comparable with and hence not addable to that collected about wholly vacant units. Also, when describing vacant accommodation, it is perhaps the wholly vacant rateable unit which is the survey's closest approximation to a 'dwelling' (See Appendix 1 for definition of a 'dwelling'). As the numbers involved are small, their exclusion will not significantly affect the results presented. However they are of interest as they contain vacant accommodation. So, in this chapter where we describe the rateable units themselves rather than the accommodation therein, these partly vacant units will be included. Again the addition of this small number of units to the figures

¹ Department of the Environment *National Dwelling and Housing Survey*, HMSO 1978, and *English House Condition Survey 1976 Part I*, HMSO 1978.

² *Ibid.*

for vacant rather than occupied housing, will not significantly bias the comparison with NDHS results. The one exception to this, however, is in the present comparison of the number of household spaces in rateable units. Because all these partly vacant units, by definition, contain more than one household space, adding them either to vacant or to non-vacant housing will clearly distort the results. They will, therefore, be excluded from both groups for this first comparison.

Of wholly vacant rateable units, 2.7% contained more than one household space, compared with 1.4% of the wholly occupied units (Table 2.3). These multi-household space units were, therefore, a slightly larger proportion of vacant than of non-vacant housing. The small number of them in the VPS (69), however, means that this slight difference between the samples could be due to sampling or other errors*. If, on the other hand, the difference represents a real one in the population of all rateable units, it indicates that multi-household space units were slightly more likely than others to be vacant.

2.3 Age of building and type of rateable unit

As many as 46% of vacant properties are known to have been built before 1900 compared with only 18% of non-vacant units while at the other end of the age scale, amongst the post World War II properties, the picture is reversed. The figures for the four age-groups shown in Table 2.4 suggest that, in general, the older the property is, the more likely it is to be vacant. This is so regardless of the possible distribution of age of those properties where age is not known†.

Table 2.3 Comparison of wholly vacant and occupied rateable units: Percentages containing one or more than one household space

Rateable units containing:—	VPS	NDHS
	Wholly vacant rateable units	Wholly occupied rateable units
	%	%
A single household space	97.3	98.6
More than one household space	2.7	1.4
Base = 100%: total sample in England	2,510	81,187

* Sampling errors in the VPS are investigated in Appendix 6.

† The 5% and 8% of vacant and non-vacant housing respectively for which age is not known have been included in the percentage distributions rather than ignored. This is because the possibility of bias in the non-response cannot be overlooked. In the NDHS, for example, age is known less often for some types of property than others, eg for 4% of semi-detached houses, 11% of purpose built flats, 20% of non-purpose built flats.

Table 2.4 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Age of building

VPS		NDHS	
Age of building	Vacant rateable units	Age of building	Occupied rateable units
	%		%
Pre-1870	18 | 46	Pre-1900	18
1870-1899	28 |		
1900-1918	16	1900-1918	7
1919-1944†	16	1919-1939†	22
1945†-1969	12 | 17	1940† or later	46
1970 or later	5 |		
Age not known	5		8
Base = 100%: total sample in England		2,555	
		81,187	

Looking at the types of rateable unit that were vacant, irrespective of their age, Table 2.5 indicates that vacant units were more likely than non-vacant ones to be terraced houses and non-purpose built flats. For example, 41% of vacant properties were terraced houses compared with 30% of occupied properties. Terraced houses were also of particular note because they constituted the largest single group of vacant units.

The largest single group of occupied rateable units, by contrast, is semi-detached housing. Vacant units were less likely to be of this type. Semi-detached houses constituted 15% of vacant units, compared with 34% of occupied units.

As well as terraced houses and non-purpose built flats, accommodation rated with a shop or office seems to be over-represented amongst vacant property. The numbers involved, however, are relatively small. Furthermore the data from the two surveys may be less comparable than for other types of property as the NDHS instructions on the classification of these were less precise than in the VPS.

Table 2.5 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Type of rateable unit

Type of rateable unit	VPS	NDHS
	Vacant rateable units	Occupied rateable units
	%	%
House or bungalow:		
detached	13	18
semi-detached	15	34
terraced	41	30
Flat or maisonette:		
purpose built	13	12
non-purpose built	12	3
Other types:		
Shop/office, etc	4	} 1
with accommodation	1	
others	1	
Type not known	1	2
Base = 100%: total sample in England	2,555	81,187

† The grouping of ages differed on the two surveys. The groups shown here are comparable, however, because relatively little housing was built between 1939 and 1944

It was shown earlier that disproportionately large numbers of vacant units, compared with occupied ones, were built before 1919. From Table 2.6 we can see that this is so regardless of the type of housing.

Table 2.6 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units:
Age of building and type of rateable unit

Age of building and type of rateable unit	VPS	NDHS
	Vacant rateable units	Occupied rateable units
	%	%
Pre-1919	62	24
House/bungalow:		
detached	6	3
semi-detached	5	4
terraced	33	13
Flat/maisonette:		
purpose built	3	1
non-purpose built	11	2
Other types	3	0
Type not known	1	1
Post-1918	33	68
House/bungalow:		
detached	6	13
semi-detached	9	29
terraced	6	15
Flat/maisonette:		
purpose built	9	10
non-purpose built	1	0
Other types	1	0
Type not known	0	1
Age of building not known	5	8
Base = 100%: total sample in England	2,555	81,187

Amongst the pre-1919 properties, the percentage of the vacant units in each category was higher than that amongst occupied units. Thus, for example, non-purpose built flats dating from before 1919 comprised 11% of vacant units but only 2% of those which were occupied. Most notable again is the group of terraced houses: those built before 1919 made up a third of all vacant properties but only 13% of occupied units.

Amongst properties built since 1918, on the other hand, the percentage of vacant housing in each type of rateable unit was, in general, lower than of those not vacant. The most marked difference was in post-1918 semi-detached housing which represented nearly 30% of all occupied units, compared with only 9% of those vacant.

An exception to this pattern was the post-1918, purpose built flat which appeared in roughly equal proportions — about 10% — amongst vacant and non-vacant housing*. This suggests that, although they have the advantage of being relatively new, these flats possess some feature which makes them more likely to be vacant than other post-1918 properties. They represented 28% of post-1918 vacant units compared with only half this proportion (ie 14%) of those occupied (Table 2.7 ii). Looking at these purpose built flats in more detail, they were found in disproportionately large numbers amongst vacant

properties whether they were built between the wars (1919-1939) or since then. The flats built between the wars, although accounting for only about a tenth of all the flats in the two groups were, however, more likely to be vacant than the post-war ones — being 18% of 1919-39 vacant and only 5% of non-vacant properties, compared with 38% of the post-1939 vacant and 19% of the non-vacant properties.

There is no clear evidence from this survey that, as is sometimes supposed, high-rise flats account for disproportionately large numbers of vacant flats. For example, purpose built flats on the third or higher floors accounted for the same proportion — about 2% — of vacant accommodation as they did of occupied housing†. The fact that flats are in a tower block may, of course, be more important than their particular floor level in influencing whether they are empty, but this was not ascertained in the present survey.

It is worth noting that amongst pre-1919 properties, terraced houses, which it will be recalled made up the largest proportion of vacant housing, did not account for disproportionately large numbers of the vacant units compared with occupied housing — they account for about 54% of both vacant and non-vacant units of this age. In terms of the characteristics so far considered, it therefore seems to be the age rather than this particular type of property which is associated with their being vacant.

Table 2.7 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units:
Type of rateable unit for (i) pre-1919 and
(ii) post-1918 units

Type of rateable unit	VPS	NDHS
	Vacant rateable units	Occupied rateable units
(i) Pre-1919	%	%
House/bungalow:		
detached	10	14
semi-detached	8	16
terraced	54	54
Flat/maisonette:		
purpose built	5	3
non-purpose built	17	9
Other types	5	0
Type not known	1	4
Base = 100%: pre-1919 rateable units	1,586	19,700
(ii) Post-1918		
House/bungalow:		
detached	20	20
semi-detached	28	42
terraced	18	22
Flat/maisonette:		
purpose built	28	14
non-purpose built	3	1
Other types	2	0
Type not known	0	2
Base = 100%: post-1918 rateable units	842	55,227

† If other types of rateable unit are considered, along with purpose built flats, however, it was found in this survey that about a fifth of vacant units had their main living accommodation on or above the first floor. This compares with about a tenth of occupied units.

* The exact proportions are not certain as the age is not known for 11% and 3% of purpose built flats in the NDHS and VPS respectively.

We have seen so far then that, amongst properties of a similar age, post-1918 purpose built flats were more likely to be vacant than some other types of property. Amongst pre-1919 properties, the same seems to be true of non-purpose built flats, in that they accounted for 17% of the older vacant properties compared with 9% of those occupied (Table 2.7 i). Conversely semi-detached houses, whatever their age, were less likely to be vacant than other types of rateable units of a similar age.

It seems therefore that amongst properties of a similar age, some types of rateable unit are still more likely than others to be vacant. So, although it can be said that, in general, the age of properties more than their type influences their propensity to be vacant, their type also has an effect.

Clearly other factors, such as possession of basic amenities, the condition of the property and so on, are related to a rateable unit's age and type. We shall go on to investigate the relationships between these factors amongst vacant properties in the next chapter but first we shall look at the proportions in the public and private sectors.

2.4 Public and private sector housing

In the spring of 1977, at the time of the survey, just under a third of vacant rateable units were in the public sector. That is, they were owned by Local Authorities, New Town Development Corporations or, in a small number of cases, were the responsibility of a Local Authority because they were under a Compulsory Purchase Order. A very similar proportion of occupied rateable units were in the public sector (Table 2.8). Thus it seems that Local Authorities (LAs) owned roughly the same proportion of vacant as they owned of occupied housing.

Table 2.8 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Owner in 1977

Owner	VPS	NDHS
	Vacant rateable units %	Occupied rateable units %
Local Authority/New Town	29	31
Private owner/landlord	68	69
Owner not known	3	—
Base* = 100%: rateable units	2,555	68,790

*The NDHS base is of the sample interviewed

Looking at the ages of public and private sector housing, nearly half of all those vacant — about 46% — were built before 1919 and owned privately and a further 16% were built before 1919 and owned by Local Authorities (Table 2.9).

Of pre-1919 vacant properties, therefore, about a quarter were owned by Local Authorities (Table 2.10). However, Local Authorities owned only 5% of pre-1919 occupied housing. So older properties in the public sector, although fewer in number, were, it seems, more likely to be vacant than those of similar age in the private sector.

Table 2.9 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Owner in 1977 and age of building

Owner and age of building	VPS	NDHS
	Vacant rateable units %	Occupied rateable units %
Pre-1919		
Local Authority owned	16	1
Privately owned	46	23
Post-1918		
Local Authority owned	13	27
Privately owned	20	41
Age of building and/or owner not known	5	7
Base* = 100%: rateable units	2,555	68,790

*See footnote to Table 2.8

Amongst newer, post-1918 properties however, this was not the case; the proportion owned by public and private sectors — 40% and 60% respectively — being the same for vacant as for occupied housing (Table 2.11).

Why then were so many of the older properties owned by Local Authorities vacant? In fact, over half of all the vacant council-owned properties were built before 1919. Either these properties were built by councils before 1919 or they had been acquired from private owners in more recent years. It will be shown in Chapter 4 that, for many of them, the latter is the case. Nearly half of them, although owned by councils at the time of the LFS, were, in fact, privately owned when last occupied and others had probably also been acquired relatively recently. In later chapters of this report, we shall describe these properties and show whether councils acquired them with the intention of demolishing or rehabilitating them. These pre-1919 vacant units owned by councils are clearly of interest. It should be remembered, however, that they represented only a quarter of pre-1919 vacant properties, three quarters being privately owned. For example, there were twice as many vacant pre-1919 terraced houses in the private sector as there were in the public sector; of pre-1919 vacant units, 35% were privately owned terraced houses compared with 18% owned by councils.

Earlier in this chapter it was shown that certain types of property were more likely to be vacant than others. Amongst pre-1919 vacant units we found that 17% were non-purpose built flats. From Table 2.10, it can be seen that most of these flats — 14% compared with 3% — were privately owned. On the other hand post-1918 purpose built flats, which were more likely to be vacant than other types of rateable unit of that age, were mainly in the public sector; council-owned flats accounted for 18% of vacant units built since 1918 compared with the 10% which were privately owned. It seems, however, that flats in the private sector were rather more likely to be vacant than those in the public sector. Local Authorities owned about three-quarters of occupied post-1918 purpose built flats but less than two-thirds of those that were vacant.

To sum up, it seems that Local Authority owned properties were neither more nor less likely to be vacant than those which were privately owned. Local Authorities however, own a disproportionately large number of the

older, pre-1919 vacant properties. Many of these, apparently privately owned when last occupied, had been recently acquired by Local Authorities. A disproportionate number of newer — post-1918 — vacant properties were purpose built flats, rather than other types of rateable unit. Although Local Authorities owned larger numbers of this type of flat, theirs were, it seems slightly less likely to be vacant than those in the private sector.

Table 2.10 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Pre-1919 rateable units — their owner and type

Owner and type	VPS	NDHS
	Pre-1919 vacant rateable units	Pre-1919 occupied rateable units
	%	%
Local Authority owned	26	5
House/bungalow detached	0	0
semi-detached	1	1
terraced	18	2
Flat/maisonette purpose built	2	1
non-purpose built	3	1
Other types	1	0
Type not known	—	—
Privately owned	74	95
House/bungalow detached	9	15
semi-detached	7	15
terraced	35	53
Flat/maisonette purpose built	3	2
non-purpose built	14	7
Other types	4	0
Type not known	1	2
Base = 100%: pre-1919 rateable units where owner known		
	1,578	16,355

Table 2.11 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Post-1918 rateable units — their owner and type

Owner and type	VPS	NDHS
	Post-1918 vacant rateable units	Post-1918 occupied rateable units
	%	%
Local Authority owned	40	40
House/bungalow detached	2	0
semi-detached	9	14
terraced	9	14
Flat/maisonette purpose built	18	10
non-purpose built	1	
Other types	—	
Type not known	0	1
Privately owned	60	60
House/bungalow detached	17	19
semi-detached	20	28
terraced	9	8
Flat/maisonette purpose built	10	3
non-purpose built	2	
Other types	2	1
Type not known	0	
Base = 100%: post-1918 rateable units where owner known		
	842	47,331

2.5 Vacancy rates

So far in this chapter we have compared vacant and occupied housing in terms of their age, type and owner to indicate which types are most likely to be vacant. We shall now take the same basic information about the properties and look at it in a different way. Using data from a number of sources, 'vacancy rates', that is, the percentages of different categories of housing which were vacant, have been estimated.* So for example, instead of saying that 41% of vacant properties were terraced houses compared with only 30% of occupied housing, we can say that 4.4% of all terraced houses were vacant. This eases interpretation of the data particularly when comparing results for different types of housing. However, as explained in Appendix 8, a number of assumptions have been made in order to arrive at these estimates and consequently they are more liable to error than the initial survey data distributions. It follows that, although the vacancy rates are given to one decimal place (eg 4.4% not 4%), this should not be taken to indicate a high level of precision in the estimates. The decimal place is shown so that grossed national figures, if needed, can be calculated using the best estimate available rather than be distorted by the use of rounded figures.

In Chapter 1, a revised estimate of 3.3%, rateable units vacant in the LFS sample was given, taking into account possible under-enumeration by the VPS. The present calculations use this revised estimate instead of the 3.0% actually enumerated.

The results shown in Tables 2.12 and 2.13 corroborate those already given in Tables 2.7, 2.10 and 2.11. They are summarised briefly below.

(a) Age and type of rateable unit

Properties built before 1919 had a higher vacancy rate, 8%, than those built later, 2%. Of the various types of unit, non-purpose built flats had the highest vacancy rate, nearly 12%. This group is small in number, however, compared with that of terraced houses which had the next highest rate, 4% (Table 2.12).

For each type of rateable unit, there was a higher vacancy rate amongst pre-1919 properties than amongst those built later. Of the pre-1919 units, non-purpose built flats had the highest vacancy rate, 13%. Also about 10% of the small number of purpose built flats were vacant, but more important in terms of numbers of vacant properties, are the 8% of pre-1919 terraced houses which were vacant. It will be remembered that these latter constituted a third of all vacant housing (Table 2.6).

Amongst post-1918 properties, purpose built flats had a relatively high vacancy rate, 3%. There are also a comparatively small number of newer, non-purpose built flats in the country and, of these, a higher percentage, 6%, were vacant.

* See Appendix 8 for details of the calculation of vacancy rates.

Table 2.12 Vacancy rates:
Percentage of rateable units vacant for different ages and types of property

Type of rateable unit	Age of building				All domestic rateable units in LFS sample	
	Pre-1919		Post-1918			
	% vacant	Base ⁺ =100%	% vacant	Base ⁺ =100%	% vacant	Base ⁺ =100%
Detached house/bungalow	5.3	3,450	1.5	12,270	2.4	15,720
Semi-detached house/bungalow	4.2	3,560	1.1	24,860	1.5	28,420
Terraced house/bungalow	7.5	13,090	1.3	13,110	4.4	26,200
Purpose built flat/maisonette	10.5	870	2.9	9,510	3.5	10,380
Non-purpose built flat/ maisonette	12.9	2,520	5.9	480	11.8	2,990
All domestic rateable units in LFS sample*	7.6	23,960	1.6	60,800	3.3	84,770

+Base numbers are rounded to the nearest 10

*Includes rateable units in residual category of 'other types'.

Table 2.13 Vacancy rates:
Percentage of rateable units vacant for different ages, types and owners of property

Type of rateable unit	Pre-1919				Post-1918				All domestic rateable units in LFS sample	
	LA owned		Privately owned		LA owned		Privately owned			
	% vacant	Base ⁺ = 100%	% vacant	Base ⁺ = 100%	% vacant	Base ⁺ = 100%	% vacant	Base ⁺ = 100%	% vacant	Base ⁺ = 100%
Detached house/bungalow	11.3†	50	5.2	3,400	6.7†	290	1.4	11,990	2.4	15,720
Semi-detached house/bungalow	11.8†	150	3.9	3,410	1.0	8,350	1.2	16,510	1.5	28,420
Terraced house/bungalow	38.6	840	5.3	12,250	1.1	8,100	1.7	5,010	4.4	26,200
Purpose built flat/maisonette	18.8†	170	8.5	710	2.4	7,300	4.3	2,210	3.5	10,380
Non-purpose built flat/ maisonette	25.0†	240	11.7	2,280	4.3†	190	7.2	290	11.8	2,990
All domestic rateable units in LFS sample*	30.6	1,500	6.1	22,470	1.6	24,450	1.6	36,350	3.3	84,770

+Base numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

*Includes rateable units in residual category of 'other types'.

†Percentage to be treated with caution as cell base is small (300 or less). See Appendix 8.

In both age groups, semi-detached housing was the least likely to be vacant; 4% of the pre-1919 group were vacant and 1% of those built later.

(b) Public and private sector housing

It was shown in Section 2.4 that, of pre-1919 vacant properties, a disproportionately large number — about a quarter — were owned by Local Authorities (who own only 5% of pre-1919 occupied housing). From Table 2.13, we see that as many as 31% of all Local Authority pre-1919 units were vacant, with the highest rate, 39%, being amongst the largest group, terraced houses. Amongst privately owned pre-1919 properties, on the other hand, the percentages vacant were lower, averaging 6%. As will be shown later some of these older vacant properties were due to be demolished (see Chapter 6 Table 6.2).

Of rateable units built since 1918, 2% of both privately owned and Local Authority owned properties were vacant. However, because of the way the numbers are distributed, for most types of housing in this age group, privately owned units were more likely to be vacant than those belonging to Local Authorities. As was seen earlier privately owned purpose built flats of this age were more likely to be vacant than those belonging to councils; 4% of the former were vacant compared with 2% of council flats.

2.6 Conclusions

A disproportionate amount of vacant accommodation is in properties built before 1919. At the time of the survey in 1977, 62% of vacant housing was in pre-1919 properties compared with 26% of occupied housing. It is estimated that 8% of pre-1919 and 2% of post-1918 housing was vacant. Within each age group, certain types of accommodation, notably flats, were more likely to be vacant than others.

As in the case of occupied housing, two thirds of vacant accommodation was privately owned, the remainder being owned by Local Authorities. In both private and public sectors, older housing was more likely than post-1918 properties to be vacant but this was particularly marked in the public sector: 16% of vacant properties were pre-1919 council owned units compared with only 1% of occupied properties. As will be shown in Chapter 4, many of these older, council properties had, however, been acquired while vacant and it seems probable that others had also been taken over from the private sector in recent years. What was to happen to these properties will be investigated in later chapters of this report. As mentioned in Chapter 1 the survey included vacant properties which were derelict and/or boarded up and some of these were due for demolition (see Chapter 6 Table 6.2).

Annex: Regional distribution

The regional distribution of vacant properties is only slightly different from that of occupied housing. The main differences seem to occur within the South East region. Of occupied housing in the NDHS, 15% were in the GLC area and 21% were in the rest of the South East (Table 2.14). Vacant properties were, however, equally distributed between the two areas with 18% in each. Therefore properties in the South East (excluding GLC) were, it seems, less likely to be vacant than properties in other regions of England, whereas properties in the GLC area itself were more likely to be vacant. (Sampling errors associated with regional distribution of the VPS sample are given in Appendix 6.) The small difference, seen in Table 2.15 between the distribution of vacant and non-vacant housing in Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan areas is mainly a reflection of these differences within the South East region.

Details of the type, age and ownership of vacant properties by region, compared with occupied housing, are shown in Tables 2.16 and 2.17. The regions have been grouped because the sample numbers in some regions are small and so not sufficiently reliable to be shown separately.

For the most part the distributions of types of vacant property found nationally are reflected in each of the four region groups. In the northern part of the country, however, terraced houses made up a particularly high proportion of the vacant properties; they represented 56%

of vacant housing in the area but only 36% of that which was occupied. The north, along with the GLC area, also had a disproportionately large number of Local Authority owned pre-1919 vacant properties.

Table 2.14 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Region

Region	VPS	NDHS
	Vacant rateable units	Occupied rateable units
	%	%
North	6	7
Yorks & Humberside	12	11
North West	16	14
East Midlands	7	8
West Midlands	11	11
East Anglia	4	4
GLC	18	15
South East (excluding GLC)	18	21
South West	8	9
<i>Base = 100%: rateable units</i>	<i>2,555</i>	<i>81,187</i>

Table 2.15 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Area type

Area	VPS	NDHS
	Vacant rateable units	Occupied rateable units
	%	%
Metropolitan (excluding GLC)	25	25
GLC	18	15
Non-metropolitan	57	60
<i>Base = 100%: rateable units</i>	<i>2,555</i>	<i>81,187</i>

Table 2.16 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units:
Types of rateable units in different regions

Type of rateable unit	Region				All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	
(a) VPS—Vacant units	%	%	%	%	%
House/bungalow					
detached	8	1	24	20	13
semi-detached	16	8	16	18	15
terraced	56	31	30	37	41
Flat/malsonette					
purpose built	10	29	9	9	13
non-purpose built	4	27	15	11	12
Other types	3	4	6	5	5
Type not known	2	—	1	1	1
Base = 100%: all vacant rateable units	869 (34%)	462 (18%)	464 (18%)	760 (30%)	2,555 (100%)
(b) NDHS—Occupied units					
House/bungalow					
detached	12	5	27	25	18
semi-detached	38	20	32	37	34
terraced	36	30	25	26	30
Flat/malsonette					
purpose built	10	30	9	8	12
non-purpose built	1	9	3	2	3
Other types	1	2	1	1	1
Type not known	2	4	2	2	2
Base = 100%: all occupied rateable units	25,526 (31%)	12,360 (15%)	17,075 (21%)	26,226 (32%)	81,187 (100%)

Table 2.17 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units:
Age of building and type of owner in different regions

Age and owner	Region				All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	
(a) VPS—Vacant units	%	%	%	%	%
Pre-1919					
Local Authority owned	20	25	7	10	16
privately owned	46	37	45	52	46
Post-1918					
Local Authority owned	13	13	12	14	13
privately owned	14	18	33	19	20
Age of building and/or owner not known	6	7	2	5	5
Base = 100%: all vacant rateable units	869 (34%)	462 (18%)	464 (18%)	760 (30%)	2,555 (100%)
(b) NDHS—Occupied units					
Pre-1919					
Local Authority owned	1	3	1	1	1
privately owned	26	25	18	21	23
Post-1918					
Local Authority owned	30	26	24	27	27
privately owned	36	34	50	44	41
Age of building and/or owner not known	6	12	8	6	7
Base = 100%: occupied rateable units where interview achieved	21,883 (32%)	9,420 (14%)	14,535 (21%)	22,952 (33%)	68,790 (100%)

3 Vacant properties and their amenities

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we described vacant rateable units in 1977 including any which may have been derelict in terms of their age and type and showed which seemed most likely to be vacant. We shall now go on to look at their amenities, size and rateable value, all of which give an indication of the quality of the accommodation.

Relating these characteristics to their age and type, we shall again compare vacant with occupied housing to show in greater detail which kinds of property were most likely to be vacant. This comparison, unlike that in the previous chapter, will be limited to rateable units which comprised a single household space. This is because the information collected on the Vacant Property Survey (VPS) and the National Dwelling and Housing Survey (NDHS) about units which contained more than one household space is not directly comparable. As the number of such multi-household space units is small (4% of vacant and 2% of non-vacant housing), their omission from the figures has little effect on the comparison.

Tables showing regional distributions are given in an annex to the chapter.

3.2 Changes made to properties while vacant

In this chapter we shall describe vacant properties as they were when identified as vacant in the LFS rather than as they were when they became vacant. In this way, we obtain the most accurate picture of what the properties were like in 1977 and so can compare them with occupied housing in the same year.

The properties identified had of course become vacant over a period spanning several years — from the 1960's onwards — and some of them were undergoing modernisation or conversion while vacant. The survey collected information about the rooms and amenities at the time the properties first became vacant along with details of any building work carried out while vacant. From this we can gauge what the properties were like in spring 1977.

Building work (that is, "reconstruction, conversion, modernisation or major repair work") had been completed in 4% of the vacant units and was in progress in a further 15% at the time of their identification in the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Sometimes work in progress included the installation of an amenity for the first time. For example, at the time of the LFS, a bath was being installed for the first time in 3% of single household space units. Such cases are shown separately in tables to indicate the situation in spring 1977 — see Table 3.1.

3.3 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units containing a single household space

(a) Basic amenities

At the time of the LFS in spring 1977, 59% of vacant properties comprising a single household space, had all three basic amenities (ie bath/shower, inside WC and a hot water supply. (See notes and definitions in Appendix 1.) In a further 5%, one or more of the amenities were being installed for the first time. By contrast, 94% of occupied units had all three amenities (Table 3.1). Vacant properties are clearly less likely than others to possess all the basic amenities. The percentages quoted for vacant properties may be lower than the actual figures because, for 9% the information about amenities is incomplete. However, even if all of the 9% had all amenities, the difference between vacant and non-vacant housing would still be significant (59 + 5 + 9 = 73% versus 94%).

Table 3.1 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Use of three basic amenities

Use of 'basic amenities'	VPS Vacant rateable units- with single household space	NDHS Occupied rateable units- with single household space
	%	%
Use of three basic amenities		
Had all three	59	94
Amenities being installed	5	—
Lacked one or two	12	4
Lacked all three	15	1
Not known	9	0
Bath (or shower)		
Sole use ⁺	64	97
Shared use ⁺	1	0
Not known if sole use	2	0
Bath being installed	3	—
Lacked	24	2
Not known	6	0
WC with entrance inside building		
Sole use ⁺	63	95
Shared use ⁺	2	0
Not known if sole use	0	—
WC being installed	4	—
Lacked inside WC — outside WC only	21	4
— no flush WC	4	0
Not known	6	0
Hot water supply		
Had hot water supply	70	98
Supply being installed	3	—
Lacked	20	2
Not known	6	0
Base = 100%: single h'hd space rateable units	2,441	68,050

* See notes and definitions in Appendix 1

+ Figures only relate to rateable units containing a single household space and most sharing in fact occurs in multi-household space units. Data to permit comparison of vacant and non-vacant units of this type is unfortunately not available.

Considering now the amenities which were lacking, 15% of vacant properties had none of the three basic amenities compared with 1% of those occupied; and 12% lacked just one or two amenities, compared with 4% of occupied units. Vacant properties were slightly more likely to be without a bath or inside WC than a hot water supply.

(b) *Basic amenities, age and type of rateable units.*

In the previous chapter it was shown that there was a higher vacancy rate amongst properties built before 1919 (8% vacant) than amongst those built later (2% vacant). This difference is probably due to a number of factors often related to age; the type of units, their condition and situation as well as their amenities which we shall consider here.

Properties built before 1919 were more likely than those built later to lack basic amenities: of vacant pre-1919 single household space units, 40% lacked at least one basic amenity compared with only 5% of post-1918 vacant properties. The corresponding figures for occupied housing were 16% and 2% of pre-1919 and post-1918 units respectively. Thus, in both age groups vacant property was two and a half times as likely as occupied property to lack an amenity, (Table 3.2).

It was also shown in the last chapter that older terraced houses and non-purpose built flats had relatively high vacancy rates and the question arises of whether this is associated with a disproportionate lack of amenities in such properties. Table 3.3 shows that amongst older property, terraced houses whether vacant or occupied were especially likely to lack at least one basic amenity, although the deficiency is most marked for vacant

ones of which about half compared with about a third of other properties were deficient. Table 3.4 shows that, amongst pre-1919 houses lacking at least one basic amenity, vacancy rates for terraced houses were no greater than for other types. Similarly there was practically no difference in vacancy rates between types of houses which had all three amenities. This suggests that the comparatively high vacancy rate for pre-1919 terraced houses, as a whole, (8% compared with 4% and 5% for other types of older house) may be associated not so much with their type but with the fact that a greater proportion of them lacked amenities — or were of poorer condition, of which a lack of amenities may be one aspect.

As terraced houses built before 1919 comprised a third of all vacant housing, it is useful to know that their prevalence is probably related not only to their age but also to at least one aspect of their condition.

The high vacancy rate amongst pre-1919 non-purpose built flats (13%), on the other hand, does not seem to be associated with a lack of amenities. Indeed these flats were less likely than any other type of unit to lack the use of basic amenities. Table 3.4 shows that, whilst vacancy rates were always higher for pre-1919 properties lacking amenities than for others, flats in both amenity groups (and it has been necessary to group all kinds of flats together because of small numbers) had a considerably higher vacancy rate than other types of housing. It is therefore probable that older flats, unlike the terraced houses, were particularly liable to be vacant for reasons unconnected with the existence or absence of basic amenities.

Table 3.2 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Age of building and use of three basic amenities

Use of basic amenities	VPS Vacant rateable units with single household space			NDHS Occupied rateable units with single household space		
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Use of three basic amenities						
Had all three	45	91	59	84	98	94
Amenities being installed	7	3	5	—	—	—
Lacked one or two	18 } 40	3 } 5	12 } 27	10 } 16	2 } 2	4 } 5
Lacked all three	23	11	15	5	0	1
Not known	8	1	9	1	0	0
Bath (or shower)						
Had bath	55	96	67	90	100	97
Bath being installed	5	1	3	—	—	—
Lacked	37	2	24	10	0	2
Not known	3	1	6	0	0	0
WC with entrance inside building						
Had inside WC	54	93	65	87	98	96
WC being installed	5	2	4	—	—	—
Lacked inside WC	32 } 38	3 } 4	21 } 25	12 } 13	1 } 1	4 } 4
— outside WC only	6	0	4	1	0	0
— no flush WC	3	1	6	0	0	0
Not known	3	1	6	0	0	0
Hot water supply						
Had hot water supply	61	95	70	92	99	98
Supply being installed	4	1	3	—	—	—
Lacked	30	4	20	8	1	2
Not known	5	0	6	0	0	0
Base = 100%: single h'nd space rateable units	1,487 (61%)	831 (34%)	2,441* (100%)	15,785 (23%)	47,345 (70%)	68,050* (100%)

* Total includes those where age of building is not known.

Table 3.3 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Pre-1919 units — type of rateable unit and use of basic amenities

Use of basic amenities	Type of rateable unit containing a single household space						Total
	Detached house	Semi-detached house	Terraced house	Purpose built flat	Non-purpose built flat	Other types	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(a) VPS — Vacant units							
Use of three basic amenities							
Had all three	59	59	34	42	66	52	45
Amenities being installed	2	10	7	12	4	3	7
Lacked one or two	16	15	20	21	12	14	18
Lacked all three	20	13	31	16	4	23	23
Not known	3	3	8	8	14	7	3
Basic amenity lacked							
Bath and shower	26	18	49	38	14	33	37
Not known	3	2	1	—	10	4	3
Inside WC	33	25	52	30	6	35	38
Not known	3	2	2	—	9	4	3
Hot water supply	26	17	37	25	12	29	30
Not known	—	3	6	8	4	3	5
Base = 100%: Pre-1919 Vacant single h'nd space rateable units	150 (10%)	119 (8%)	801 (54%)	80 (5%)	256 (17%)	69 (5%)	1,487* (100%)
(b) NDHS — Occupied units							
Use of three basic amenities							
Had all three	93	90	79	79	91	93	84
Lacked one of two	4	7	13	15	7	5	10
Lacked all three	2	3	7	6	2	2	5
Not known	0	0	1	1	0	—	1
Basic amenity lacked							
Bath and shower	4	6	13	15	4	3	10
Inside WC	5	7	18	13	4	7	13
Hot water supply	4	5	10	12	5	2	8
Base = 100%: Pre-1919 occupied single h'nd space rateable units	2,369 (15%)	2,513 (16%)	8,840 (56%)	480 (3%)	1,257 (8%)	60 (0%)	15,785* (100%)

* Total include those where type of rateable unit is not known.

Amongst post-1918 vacant properties, the percentages lacking amenities were much smaller than for pre-1919 properties and differences between types less marked. Indeed Table 3.5 shows that very few of the vacancies in the more recently built properties can in any way be attributed to a lack of basic amenities.

In summary, Tables 3.1 — 3.5 show that vacant properties include a disproportionate number which lack basic amenities. Nevertheless, nearly 60% of vacant accommodation had all three amenities, so that whilst their absence evidently predisposes properties to be vacant it fails to help account for the majority of vacancies.

Table 3.4 Percentage of pre-1919 rateable units vacant for different types of rateable unit with or without all three basic amenities.[†]

Type of rateable unit	Pre-1919 rateable units — use of basic amenities					
	Had all three basic amenities		Lacked at least one or having them installed		All pre-1919 rateable units	
	% vacant	base = 100%	% vacant	base = 100%	% vacant	base = 100%
Detached or semi-detached house/ bungalow	3	6,430	22	580	5	7,010
Terraced house/ bungalow	4	10,400	23	2,690	8	13,090
Flat/maisonette	10	2,990	31	400	12	3,390
All pre-1919 rateable units*	4	20,220	25	3,740	8	23,960

* Includes those in residual category of 'other types'.

[†] Note These vacancy rates are more approximate than those shown in Chapter 2 as the following additional assumptions have been made for their calculation:—

- The percentage lacking amenities amongst single household space units has been applied to all rateable units, whether they comprise one or more household spaces.
- In both the VPS and NDHS, those where amenities are not known have been distributed in the same way as where the information is known. This is in addition to the non-response on age and type of unit being distributed in this way.

See Appendix 8 for a full explanation of how vacancy rates have been calculated.

Table 3.5 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Post-1918 units - type of rateable unit and use of basic amenities

Use of basic amenities	Type of rateable unit containing a single household space						
	Detached house	Semi-detached house	Terraced house	Purpose built flat	Non-purpose built flat	Other types	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(a) VPS-Vacant units							
Use of three basic amenities							
Had all three	94	92	83	95	(19)	(15)	91
Amenities being installed	—	4	7	—	(1)	(—)	3
Lacked one or two	1	3	6	3	(—)	(—)	3
Lacked all three	2	—	3	1	(1)	(—)	1
Not known	2	0	1	0	(1)	(1)	1
Basic amenity lacked							
Bath and shower	4	2	4	1	(1)	(—)	2
Not known	1	0	1	0	(1)	(—)	1
Inside WC	4	2	9	1	(1)	(—)	4
Not known	1	0	1	0	(1)	(—)	1
Hot water supply	4	2	4	5	(2)	(—)	4
Not known	1	—	—	—	(—)	(1)	0
Base = 100%: Post-1918 vacant 163 single h'ld space rateable unit (20%)							
		239 (29%)	151 (18%)	238 (29%)	22 (3%)	16 (2%)	831* (100%)
(b) NDHS - Occupied units							
Use of three basic amenities							
Had all three	99	98	96	99	96	98	98
Lacked one or two	1	2	3	1	4	2	2
Lacked all three	0	0	0	—	0	—	0
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	—	0
Basic amenity lacked							
Bath and shower	0	0	0	0	3	—	0
Inside WC	0	2	3	0	1	1	2
Hot water supply	0	0	1	1	3	1	1
Base = 100%: Post-1918 occupied single h'ld space rateable units							
	9,360 (20%)	20,315 (43%)	10,543 (22%)	6,483 (14%)	281 (1%)	118 (0%)	47,345* (100%)

* Total includes those where type of rateable unit is not known.

(c) Other amenities and age of rateable unit.

In the same way as vacant properties tended to lack basic amenities, they were more likely than non-vacant ones to lack other amenities, namely, a sink, kitchen and central heating. This is so regardless of the category into which those where the information is not known are placed. Almost all occupied units had a kitchen and a sink but 3% of vacant units lacked each of these amenities. Similarly a smaller proportion of occupied units (46%) than of vacant ones (67%) were without central heating or storage heating (Table 3.6).

The differences noted between the two age groups regarding possession of basic amenities are also seen with respect to other amenities.

Of pre-1919 vacant units, about 5% had no sink and 4% no kitchen, compared with less than 1/2% and 2% respectively amongst newer vacant properties. Although the percentages are small, vacant units in both age groups seem more likely than occupied ones to lack a kitchen and/or sink. Similarly, more of the pre-1919 vacant properties than of the newer ones had no central heating. Within each age group, a greater proportion of vacant than occupied housing lacked this form of heating (Table 3.7).

Table 3.6 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space: Use of other amenities

Use of other amenities*	VPS Vacant rateable units- with single house- hold space	NDHS Occupied rateable units with single household space
	%	%
Sink		
Had sink	90	100
Sink being installed	1	—
Lacked	3	0
Not known	6	0
Kitchen		
Had kitchen	92	99
Kitchen being added	0	—
Lacked	3	0
Not known	5	1
Central heating		
Had central heating	21	54
Central heating being installed	5	—
Lacked	67	46
Not known	7	0
Base = 100%: single h'ld space rateable units		
	2,441	68,050

* See notes and definitions in Appendix 1

(d) Size, age and type of rateable unit.

Our measure of size is the number of rooms in a unit but,

unlike some counts of rooms presented in housing statistics, kitchens are excluded**. As in the case of amenities, the number of rooms given here applies to the vacant units at the time of the LFS. The 3% of properties, where building work was going on and a change in the number of rooms reported, are therefore shown separately in the tables.

Looked at in total, rateable units with 1-3 rooms were more likely to be vacant than larger ones: 36% of vacant units had 1-3 rooms compared with 28% of occupied ones (Table 3.8). And this was so whether the properties were built before 1919 or later than that. However the size of a property is closely related to its type. For example flats, by their very nature, tend to have fewer rooms than

most houses. Thus amongst occupied units 81% of flats had 1 to 3 rooms compared with only 18% of houses.

It was shown earlier that flats whatever their age had a higher than average vacancy rate and that this had little to do with their possession of amenities. Table 3.9 suggests that the high rate also had nothing to do with their small size, for amongst those built after 1918 vacant flats tended to be rather larger than occupied ones: 31% of the vacant flats had 4 or more rooms compared with 16% of those which were occupied. Amongst older flats the difference is in the opposite direction but it is small and doubtful because of the rather high proportion for which the number of rooms is unknown.

Table 3.7 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Age of building and use of other amenities

Use of others amenities ⁺	VPS Vacant rateable units with single household space			NDHS Occupied rateable units with single household space		
	Pre-1919 %	Post-1918 %	Total %	Pre-1919 %	Post-1918 %	Total %
Sink						
Had sink	91	98	90	99	100	100
Sink being installed	1	—	1	—	—	—
Lacked	5	0	3	1	0	0
Not known	3	1	6	0	0	0
Kitchen						
Had kitchen	94	98	92	98	99	99
Kitchen being added	0	—	0	—	—	—
Lacked	4	2	3	1	0	0
Not known	2	1	5	1	1	1
Central heating						
Had central heating	10	45	21	33	61	54
Central heating being installed	4	6	5	—	—	—
Lacked	82	47	67	67	38	46
Not known	3	2	7	0	0	0
Base = 100%: single h'nd space rateable units	1,487 (61%)	831 (34%)	2,441* (100%)	15,785 (23%)	47,345 (70%)	68,050* (100%)

+ See notes and definitions in Appendix 1

* Total includes those where age of building is not known

Table 3.8 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Age of building and number of rooms (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, etc)⁺

Number of rooms (excluding kitchens, bathrooms etc)	VPS Vacant rateable units with single h'nd space			NDHS Occupied rateable units with single h'nd space		
	Pre-1919 %	Post-1918 %	Total %	Pre-1919 %	Post-1918 %	Total %
1	2	2	2	1	1	1
2	8	8	8	6	6	7
3	29	22	26	20	20	20
4	24	34	26	29	37	34
5	18	24	19	26	28	27
6	7	2	5	9	6	6
7 or more	6	3	5	10	2	4
Not known	2	1	6	—	—	—
Work in progress to change number	4	2	3	—	—	—
Base = 100%: single h'nd space rateable units	1,487 (61%)	831 (34%)	2,441* (100%)	15,785 (23%)	47,345 (70%)	68,050* (100%)

+ See notes and definitions in Appendix 1

* Total includes those where age of building is not known

** Kitchens are excluded from the count of rooms in both the NDHS and VPS results. This is because of the difficulty, in the latter survey, in obtaining the information normally required about the width of a kitchen to determine whether it counts as a room or not.

Table 3.9 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Flats — age of building and number of rooms (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, etc)*

Number of rooms (excluding kitchens, bathrooms etc)	VPS Vacant flats		NDHS Occupied flats			
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total (excl. age not known)	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total (excl. age not known)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	6	7	7	6	5	5
2	24 } 68	20 } 66	23 } 67	33 } 73	33 } 84	33 } 81
3	37	39	37	35	46	44
4	12	26	18	19	14	15
5	5	4	5	2	2	2
6	3	—	2	2	16	0
7 or more	2	1	1	—	0	1
Not known/changing	10	3	7	—	—	—
Base = 100%: single h'hd space flats	336 (56%)	262 (44%)	598 (100%)	1,737 (20%)	6,764 (80%)	8,501 (100%)

Table 3.10 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Houses — age of building and number of rooms (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, etc)*

Number of rooms (excluding kitchens, bathrooms etc)	VPS Vacant houses		NDHS Occupied houses			
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total (excl. age not known)	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total (excl. age not known)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1	1	—	0	0	0	0
2	4 } 31	3 } 17	4 } 26	2 } 20	2 } 18	2 } 18
3	26	14	22	18	16	16
4	27	38	31	30	41	38
5	21 } 64	33 } 80	26 } 69	29 } 80	33 } 82	32 } 82
6	8	4	6	10	7	7
7 or more	8	5	7	11	3	5
Not known/changing	5	3	4	—	—	—
Base = 100%: single h'hd space houses	1,070 (66%)	553 (34%)	1,623 (100%)	13,722 (25%)	40,218 (75%)	53,940 (100%)

* See notes and definitions in Appendix 1

In the case of houses the situation was somewhat different. Houses which were vacant included a greater proportion of small ones (1-3 rooms) than did those which were occupied (Table 3.10). This was entirely due to the situation amongst houses built before 1919 of which nearly a third of the vacant ones but only 20% of those occupied were small. The disparity arises because of the disproportionate number of small terraced houses amongst vacant property. This type accounted for 27% of the older vacant houses, but only 16% of the older occupied ones (Table 3.11).

Small size in houses, if not flats therefore appears to be associated with vacancy, although the association is more tenuous than that between a lack of basic amenities and vacancy. In addition, size itself is related to the possession of amenities: over 60% of small vacant houses, compared with about 40% of the larger ones lacked at least one basic amenity.

We have, of course, assumed throughout this section, as do most housing statistics that the number of rooms is a reasonable measure of size and have ignored the possibility that some rooms may be large and open plan. Since we call only houses with three or fewer rooms 'small' the assumption appears realistic because however

large the living room, one to two bedrooms mean that the house will almost certainly be small.

(e) Rateable value and age of building.

Rateable values are assigned to properties for inland revenue, rate-collection purposes. The values recorded when sampling units from valuation lists for the LFS and NDHS dated from 1973 when the lists were compiled, or since then if alterations had been made to properties or new units built.

Because vacant, compared with non-vacant properties tended to be old, to lack amenities and were more often small, we would expect their rateable values to be lower than those for occupied properties. This expectation is borne out by the results shown in Table 3.12. As many as 24% of single household space vacant units had a low rateable value (that is, of £3-£75) and a further 3% had a nominal or zero rating or had been taken out of rating, probably prior to demolition. The corresponding proportions amongst non-vacant housing were 6% and 1%.

Also within each age group, a larger proportion of vacant than non-vacant units had a low rateable value, the

proportions being higher amongst pre-1919 properties, 35% of these older vacant properties had low values (of £3-£75) compared with 22% of the non-vacant ones. Amongst newer properties the corresponding figures were 5% and 1%.

Table 3.11 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space: Pre-1919 houses - type and size

Type and size	VPS	NDHS
	Wholly vacant houses	Wholly occupied houses
	%	%
Detached		
1 - 3 rooms	3	2
4 + rooms	11	16
Semi-detached		
1 - 3 rooms	3	3
4 + rooms	8	16
Terraced		
1 - 3 rooms	27	16
4 + rooms	48	49
Base = 100%: houses with single h'nd space where no. of rooms known		
	1,017	13,722

As can be seen in the annex to this chapter, there are regional differences in assigning rateable values and they cannot be used as an absolute measure of the size and quality of housing as the same kind of property may be given a different value in different regions.

3.4 Conclusions

We have in this chapter given an indication of the quality of vacant compared with occupied housing in 1977. In general, that which was vacant was more likely than other

accommodation to lack basic and other amenities, to be small (that is to have 1-3 rooms) and to have a low rateable value. Size and the possession of amenities are related to one another and both are related to the age and type of property, whilst rateable value was shown by the English House Condition Survey of 1976 (EHCS) to give a good indication of the quality of housing as measured by the estimated necessary repair costs¹.

In general the evidence of the present survey yields the same conclusion as that of the EHCS; that vacant property is on the whole of poorer quality than that which is occupied. The present survey allows us to show, as the EHCS (being concerned with all housing) does not, how aspects of the quality of vacant accommodation are related to its other characteristics, such as duration of vacancy and previous tenure. It is, however, worth quoting a finding from the EHCS, which was carried out by surveyors and which highlights the difference in quality between vacant and other housing. The EHCS in 1976 estimated repair costs to be £1000 or more for 40% of vacant dwellings but for only 13% of all dwellings in their sample.²

¹ Department of the Environment, *English House Condition Survey 1976, Part I Report of the Physical Condition Survey*, Housing Survey Report No 10, London HMSO, 1978.

² *Op cit*, Table 19, p20 (There is a typographical error in the vacant column of the table: the percentage for £1,000 - £1,999 should be 13.5 and not 3.5).

The estimated repair costs in the EHCS excluded the cost of installing basic amenities for the first time and of internal redecoration unless required as a result of other repairs - App III, p28.

Table 3.12 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space: Age of building and rateable value

Rateable value	VPS			NDHS		
	Vacant rateable units with single household space			Occupied rateable units with single household space		
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
£3-75	35	5	24	22	1	6
£76-100	14	4	11	17	3	6
£101-150	23	22	23	26	19	20
£151-200	11	30	18	15	29	25
£201-300	7	28	15	14	36	30
£301-400	3	5	3	4	8	8
£401-500	1	3	1	1	2	2
£501 and over	2	3	2	1	1	2
Block Crown	†	†	†	0	0	0
Exempt/Zero-rated	†	0	1	†	†	†
Nominal £1 rating	1	-	1	†	†	†
Taking out of rating (TOR)	2	-	1	0	0	0
Not known	-	-	-	-	-	-
Base = 100%: single h'nd space rateable units	1,487 (61%)	831 (34%)	2,441* (100%)	18,997 (24%)	55,043 (69%)	80,104* (100%)

† Not separately identified in sample.

* Total includes those where age of building is not known.

Annex: Regional distribution

Comparing vacant and occupied housing in terms of their amenities, size and rateable value, we find similar differences in each of the four region groups as found nationally. Vacant properties were generally poorer quality housing. A few interesting differences between regions exist. For example, although the percentage of occupied units lacking at least one basic amenity is roughly the same (4-6%) in each region, there are marked regional differences in this respect amongst vacant housing. The percentage of vacant units lacking amenities was highest in the northern regions (35%) and lowest in the South East (excluding GLC) (15%) (Table 3.14). However those properties having amenities installed at the time of the survey represented about the same proportion of all which were vacant (5%) in each region.

When considering the figures for regions, it should be noted that nothing is known about the amenities in some vacant properties. This is particularly so in some regions, notably the GLC (Table 3.14). Even so, it would seem, from the above, that properties lacking basic amenities in the northern regions were more likely to be vacant than in other regions, particularly the South East. The north also has a high proportion of vacant units with low rateable values (48% with values £3 — £75 compared with 13% on non-vacant units). Regional differences in rateable values of vacant properties seem, to some extent, to reflect the fairly marked regional differences amongst occupied properties. For example, in the GLC only 1% of vacant and less than 1/2% of occupied housing had values of £3 — £75 (Table 3.17).

Table 3.13 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Region and use of basic amenities

Use of basic amenities	Region	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	All England
	%	%	%	%	%
(a) VPS — Vacant units					
Use of three basic amenities					
Had all three	49	60	74	62	59
Amenities being installed	5	4	6	6	5
Lacked one or two	16	13	5	11	12
Lacked all three	19	7	10	16	15
Not known	11	16	6	5	9
Basic amenity lacked					
Bath and shower	33	18	11	23	24
Not known	6	10	4	5	6
Inside WC	36	13	13	25	25
Not known	7	10	5	4	6
Hot water supply	24	16	15	22	20
Not known	9	12	3	3	6
Base = 100%: vacant single h'hd space rateable units (35%)	849	413 (17%)	438 (18%)	741 (30%)	2,441 (100%)
(b) NDHS — Occupied units					
Use of three basic amenities					
Had all three	94	95	96	94	94
Lacked one or two	4	4	3	4	4
Lacked all three	2	1	1	1	1
Not known	0	0	0	0	0
Basic amenity lacked					
Bath and shower	3	2	2	2	3
Inside WC	6	3	3	4	4
Hot water supply	2	2	2	3	2
Base = 100%: occupied single h'hd space rateable units	21,816 (32%)	9,065 (13%)	14,381 (21%)	22,788 (34%)	68,050 (100%)

Table 3.14 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Region and use of other amenities

Use of other amenities	Region	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West				
	%	%	%	%	%
(a) VPS - Vacant units					
Sink					
Had sink	91	87	92	90	90
Sink being installed	0	1	1	1	1
Lacked	3	3	3	4	3
Not known	6	9	5	5	6
Kitchen					
Had kitchen	91	88	94	93	92
Kitchen being added	0	0	—	—	0
Lacked	3	4	2	3	3
Not known	5	8	4	4	5
Central heating					
Had central heating	16	20	28	25	21
Central heating being installed	5	4	5	5	5
Lacked	73	66	62	65	67
Not known	7	10	6	5	7
Base = 100%: vacant single h'hd space rateable units	849 (35%)	413 (17%)	438 (18%)	741 (30%)	2,441 (100%)
(b) NDHS - Occupied units					
Amenity lacked					
Sink	0	0	0	0	0
Kitchen	1	1	0	0	1
Central heating	51	49	33	45	46
Base = 100%: occupied single h'hd space rateable units	21,816 (32%)	9,065 (13%)	14,381 (21%)	22,788 (34%)	68,050 (100%)

Table 3.15 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Region and number of rooms

Number of rooms (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, etc)	Region	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West				
	%	%	%	%	%
(a) VPS - Vacant units					
1	1	3	3	1	2
2	6	15	7	8	8
3	34	27	20	19	26
4	27	18	28	29	26
5	17	14	23	22	19
6	3	5	8	5	5
7 or more	3	5	6	7	5
Not known	6	8	4	5	6
Work in progress to change number	3	4	1	4	3
Base = 100%: vacant single h'hd space rateable units	849 (35%)	413 (17%)	438 (18%)	741 (30%)	2,441 (100%)
(b) NDHS - Occupied units					
1	1	2	1	1	1
2	7	11	6	5	7
3	23	24	19	17	20
4	34	27	35	37	34
5	26	25	27	29	27
6	5	6	8	6	6
7 or more	4	4	5	4	4
Base = 100%: occupied single h'hd space rateable units	21,816 (32%)	9,065 (13%)	14,381 (21%)	22,788 (34%)	68,050 (100%)

Table 3.16 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units comprising a single household space:
Region and rateable value

Rateable value	Region				All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	
	%	%	%	%	%
(a) VPS - Vacant units					
£3-75	48	1	5	22	24
£76-100	14	2	10	13	11
£101-150	19	18	30	26	23
£151-200	10	23	24	20	18
£201-300	5	36	18	13	15
£301-400	1	10	5	2	3
£401-500	1	2	3	1	1
£501 and over	1	5	4	2	2
Block Crown	†	†	†	†	†
Exempt/Zero-rated	0	2	1	1	1
Nominal £1 rating	1	1	—	1	1
Taken out of rating ('TOR')	2	1	1	1	1
Base = 100%: vacant single h'hd space rateable units	849 (33%)	413 (17%)	438 (18%)	741 (30%)	2,441 (100%)
(b) NDHS - Occupied units					
£3-75	13	0	2	4	6
£76-100	11	0	4	6	6
£101-150	31	5	14	22	20
£151-200	25	16	24	31	25
£201-300	15	50	39	28	30
£301-400	3	18	11	5	8
£401-500	1	4	4	2	2
£501 and over	1	6	3	2	2
Block Crown	0	0	0	0	0
Exempt/Zero-rated	1	1	1	1	1
Nominal £1 rating	†	†	†	†	†
Taken out of rating ('TOR') }	0	0	0	0	0
Not known					
Base = 100%: occupied single h'hd space rateable units	25,372 (32%)	11,934 (15%)	16,857 (21%)	25,941 (32%)	80,104 (100%)

† Not separately identified in sample.

4 The previous tenure of vacant properties

4.1 Introduction

The age, type and quality of accommodation all appear to influence the likelihood of its being vacant. We have seen, however, that not all vacant property is old or of poor quality, nor does age and condition alone determine its status as vacant or occupied. Amongst other interacting factors, the tenure of a property and the owner's plans for it are likely to play a part. Indeed the reasons for vacancies, as will be shown later, differ somewhat for different tenure groups.

In this chapter, we shall describe the tenure of vacant housing and relate it to some of the other characteristics already considered in this report, their age, type and possession of basic amenities. This will provide us with a clear idea of the types of vacant accommodation in each tenure group and serve as a preliminary to the detailed examination of reasons for vacancies in chapters 6 and 7 of this report.

In the previous chapter, we included only single household space rateable units. This was to facilitate comparison of figures for vacant accommodation with those for occupied housing in the National Dwelling and Housing Survey (NDHS). At this point, as we shall not be continuing with this comparison, all wholly vacant units will again be included, whether or not they comprised a single household space or more than one. As explained earlier, wholly vacant rateable units are perhaps the closest approximation to 'dwellings' which is possible from the survey data.

4.2 What is meant by the tenure of vacant properties?

So far in this report we have described vacant properties as they were in spring 1977, that is, at the time of their identification in the Labour Force Survey (LFS). This has enabled us to compare the characteristics of vacant and occupied housing in the same year. When we come to tenure, however, such a direct comparison is not possible. This is because the tenure of a property once vacant is 'vacant' and we can only sensibly talk about its tenure before it became vacant and that for which it is destined when it is reoccupied. We shall mainly be concerned here with the previous tenure of vacant housing and, although we shall look at it in the light of the tenure pattern of occupied housing in 1977, it is as well to be aware of the drawbacks of making any direct comparison. Certainly vacancy rates for different tenure groups cannot be very accurately calculated using the previous tenure of vacant housing. The limitations stem from the fact that the period over which the sampled properties had become vacant spans a period of some years. As we shall show later in this report, the tenure for which vacant properties

were destined often differed from that existing before they became vacant. In addition, because the tenure pattern in the country has changed over recent years it may be misleading to compare the tenure of occupied housing in 1977 with the previous tenure of vacant properties.

After looking at the previous tenure of vacant accommodation we shall consider changes in ownership — between private and public sectors — which had occurred by the time of the LFS, in 1977.

Tables showing regional distributions are given at the end of the chapter.

4.3 Previous tenure of vacant properties

The largest single group of properties vacant in 1977 had previously been privately rented: as many as 40% originated from this sector compared with only 13% of occupied units (Table 4.1). This relatively high number of formerly privately rented vacant units may partly be explained by the higher proportion of all housing in that sector in the years that the sampled properties became vacant. However, as only 24% of housing was privately rented as long ago as 1966 and 19% in 1971¹, this is clearly not the main reason for such numbers occurring amongst the vacant units. In fact the large amount of vacant accommodation which was previously privately rented may occur either because accommodation in this sector has been particularly liable to become vacant or because,

Table 4.1 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Previous tenure of vacant units and tenure in 1977 of occupied units

Previous tenure	VPS	Tenure in 1977	NDHS
	Wholly vacant rateable units		Wholly occupied rateable units
	%		%
Rented from Local Auth.	21	Rented from Local Auth.	31
Privately rented*	40	Privately rented*	13
Owner-occupied	32	Owner occupied	56
New-never lived in or non-domestic	1		
Tenure not known	6		
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units 2,510		Base = 100%: wholly occupied rateable units where tenure known 68,790	

* Privately rented units include those rented from housing associations or government departments. In the VPS, it also includes a small number rented by the council staff, such as police, from councils.

¹ Department of Environment Housing and Construction Statistics Vol. 25, Table XI.

having become empty, it remained so for longer periods than property of other tenures. The question will be further examined in the chapter on length of vacancy, although it is not conclusively answered by the present cross-sectional, as opposed to longitudinal, survey.

Compared with occupied units in 1977, vacant properties were less likely to have been either previously owner-occupied or Local Authority tenancies. Again this may be because properties in these tenure groups become vacant less often than privately rented accommodation or because they tend to remain vacant for shorter periods.

The fact that only 21% of vacant properties were formerly Local Authority tenancies is of interest. It will be remembered that a higher proportion of vacant housing, 29%, was owned by Local Authorities at the time of the LFS (Table 2.8). The extra 8% as will be shown in Section 4.6, had been acquired by councils, while vacant. It will also be shown that others amongst the pre-1919, council-owned vacant properties had probably been acquired in relatively recent years. The extent to which these properties were due for demolition or rehabilitation is given in Chapter 6.

4.4 Previous tenure of different ages and types of vacant properties

We have seen that, compared with the tenure pattern amongst occupied housing in 1977, disproportionately large numbers of vacant properties had come from the privately rented sector. This was so both for properties built before 1919 and for those built later. As many as half the pre-1919 vacant units, compared with less than a third of occupied units, were from the privately rented sector. Amongst post-1918 properties, over a quarter of those vacant were previously privately rented compared with only 6% of occupied housing (Table 4.2).

Previous Local Authority tenancies also accounted for disproportionately large numbers of the pre-1919 vacant properties (14% of vacant but only 5% of occupied housing). This was not the case, however, amongst newer vacant housing where they occur in roughly the same proportion (40%) as amongst properties which were occupied in 1977 (Table 4.2).

As shown earlier, pre-1919 terraced houses formed the largest single group — a third of all vacant rateable units. It seems that roughly equal proportions of these (40%) were previously privately rented and owner occupied, the rest being council tenancies (Table 4.3). The type with the highest vacancy rate was pre-1919 non-purpose built flats. Of these over two-thirds were previously privately rented. In contrast, it was the previous council lettings which accounted for two thirds of the more recent purpose built flats; the type with the highest vacancy rates amongst post-1918 properties. It will be remembered that the privately owned of these flats had a higher vacancy rate than those belonging to councils (See Chapter 2.4). Most of the private sector flats were previously privately rented and, compared with other types of unit, very few of these newer flats, 8%, were previously owner-occupied

(Table 4.3). Over half the purpose built flats of all ages were former council lettings.

Table 4.2 Comparison of vacant and occupied rateable units: Age of building and (a) previous tenure of vacant units (b) tenure in 1977 of occupied units

Tenure	Pre-1919 %	Post-1918 %	Total %
(a) VPS — Vacant units			
<i>Previous tenure</i>			
Rented from Local Auth.	14	38	21
Privately rented	49	27	40
Owner-occupied	33	32	32
New-never lived in	—	1	} 1
Non-domestic use	0	0	
Tenure not known	4	2	6
<i>Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units</i>			
	1,548 (62%)	838 (33%)	2,510* (100%)
(b) NDHS — Occupied units			
<i>Tenure in 1977</i>			
Rented from Local Auth.	5	40	31
Privately rented	29	6	13
Owner-occupied	66	54	56
<i>Base = 100%: wholly occupied rateable units where tenure known</i>			
	16,355 (24%)	47,331 (69%)	68,790* (100%)

* Total includes those where age is not known.

Looking briefly at the tenure of vacant rateable units lacking basic amenities, a disproportionate number were previously privately rented. Over half of those lacking at least one amenity from the privately rented sector. A quarter were owner-occupied and about a fifth Local Authority tenancies (Table 4.4).

It is apparent that the sectors from which the vacancies originated differed according to the kind of property involved. In particular there appears to be some concentration of formerly privately rented accommodation amongst older housing and amongst that lacking at least one of the basic amenities.

Having shown the previous tenure of properties of different kinds, we shall now consider the converse; the kinds of properties which characterised each former tenure group.

4.5 Vacant properties in each previous tenure group

a) Previously rented from Local Authorities

Of the vacant properties formerly rented from Local Authorities, 40% were built before 1919 (Table 4.5). Although this is a lower proportion than in either of the other previous tenure groups, it is much higher than that amongst occupied Local Authority housing in 1977, of which only 4% was built before 1919. Nearly two thirds of the vacant pre-1919 council lettings were terraced houses and well over half lacked at least one basic amenity at the

**Table 4.3 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Type of rateable unit and previous tenure by age of building**

Age of building/ previous tenure	Detached house	Semi-detached house	Terraced house	Purpose built flat	Non-purpose built flat	Other types	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Pre-1919							
Rented from Local Authority	3	8	16	26	15	9	14
Privately rented	56	46	40	70	68	48	49
Owner-occupied	38	43	40	4	12	32	33
Non-domestic	—	—	0	—	1	3	0
Tenure not known	3	2	4	—	4	8	4
<i>Base = 100%: Pre-1919</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>829</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>268</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>1,548*</i>
<i>wholly vacant rateable units</i>	<i>(10%)</i>	<i>(8%)</i>	<i>(54%)</i>	<i>(5%)</i>	<i>(17%)</i>	<i>(5%)</i>	<i>(100%)</i>
(ii) Post-1918							
Rented from Local Authority	8	28	49	65	(3)	(—)	38
Privately rented	28	26	18	26	(16)	(12)	27
Owner-occupied	61	43	28	8	(3)	(2)	32
New or non-domestic	2	1	1	1	(—)	(2)	2
Tenure not known	—	2	4	1	(—)	(—)	2
<i>Base = 100%: Post-1918</i>	<i>164</i>	<i>240</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>838*</i>
<i>wholly vacant rateable units</i>	<i>(20%)</i>	<i>(29%)</i>	<i>(18%)</i>	<i>(28%)</i>	<i>(3%)</i>	<i>(2%)</i>	<i>(100%)</i>
(iii) All ages							
Rented from Local Authority	5	20	21	53	14	7	21
Privately rented	40	33	36	36	66	51	40
Owner-occupied	48	42	37	7	11	28	32
New or non-domestic	2	1	0	1	1	4	1
Tenure not known	5	4	6	4	9	10	6
<i>Base = 100%: All wholly</i>	<i>336</i>	<i>384</i>	<i>1,021</i>	<i>331</i>	<i>314</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>2,510*</i>
<i>vacant rateable units</i>	<i>(13%)</i>	<i>(15%)</i>	<i>(41%)</i>	<i>(13%)</i>	<i>(12%)</i>	<i>(4%)</i>	<i>(100%)</i>

* Total includes those where type of rateable unit not known.

**Table 4.4 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Use of basic amenities at the time of the LFS and previous tenure**

Previous tenure	Use of three basic amenities			Total
	Had all three	Amenity being installed	Lacked at least one	
	%	%	%	%
Rented from Local Authority	23	26	19	21
Privately rented	36	39	54	40
Owner-occupied	38	30	23	32
New or non-domestic	1	2	0	1
Not known	2	2	3	6
<i>Base = 100%: wholly</i>	<i>1480</i>	<i>136</i>	<i>669</i>	<i>2510*</i>
<i>vacant rateable units</i>	<i>(59%)</i>	<i>(5%)</i>	<i>(27%)</i>	<i>(100%)</i>

* Total includes those where amenities not known.

time they became vacant† (Tables 4.6i and 4.7i). As will be discussed in Section 4.6, at least some of these older properties were probably acquired by councils in recent years.

About 60% of former council lettings were built after 1918, and nearly half of these were purpose built flats (Tables 4.5 and 4.6). At the time the vacancy began, 10%

of the group lacked at least one basic amenity, which was a rather higher proportion than in the other two tenure groups (Table 4.7). Only 6% (10 out of 155) of the purpose built flats lacked amenities so the vast majority had all three. The absence of basic amenities does not seem therefore, to have contributed to the disproportionately large number of these flats amongst the vacant council lettings in newer properties.

b) Previously privately rented

Three quarters of the previously privately rented vacant properties were built before 1919 (Table 4.5). This is a higher proportion than for either of the other tenure groups and compares with just over 60% of occupied housing in the privately rented sector.

† It should be noted that because we are describing the kind of properties in each former tenure group, the amenities considered are those at the time the vacancy began. This is different from our earlier practice, when in order to gain a representative picture of vacant housing at one time, we described the amenities at the time the properties were identified as vacant.

Table 4.5 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Previous tenure and age of building

Age of building	Previous tenure		Privately rented	Owner-occupied	All wholly vacant units
	Rented from Local Authority	%			
Pre-1919	40	%	75	64	62
Post-1918	59	%	22	34	33
Age not known	1	%	2	2	5
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	538 (21%)		1009 (40%)	792 (32%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where tenure not known.

Table 4.6 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Previous tenure and type of rateable unit by age of building

Age of building and type of rateable unit	Previous tenure		Privately rented	Owner-occupied	All wholly vacant units
	Rented from Local Authority	%			
(i) Pre-1919		%	%	%	%
House/bungalow					
detached	2		11	12	10
semi-detached	5		8	11	8
terraced	63		44	65	54
Flat/maisonette					
purpose built	10		8	1	5
non-purpose built	18		24	6	17
Other	3		5	5	5
Type not known	—		1	1	1
Base = 100%: Pre-1919 wholly vacant rateable units	218 (14%)		761 (49%)	507 (33%)	1548* (100%)
(ii) Post-1918					
House/bungalow					
detached	4		20	37	20
semi-detached	21		28	38	29
terraced	24		12	16	18
Flat/maisonette					
purpose built	49		27	7	28
non-purpose built	1		7	1	3
Other	—		5	1	2
Type not known	1		—	0	0
Base = 100%: Post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	317 (38%)		225 (27%)	271 (32%)	838* (100%)
(iii) All ages					
House/bungalow					
detached	3		13	20	13
semi-detached	14		13	20	15
terraced	40		36	48	41
Flat/maisonette					
purpose built	33		12	3	13
non-purpose built	8		20	4	12
Other	1		5	4	4
Type not known	0		1	1	1
Base = 100%: All wholly vacant rateable units	538 (21%)		1009 (40%)	792 (32%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where tenure not known and also those new or used for non-domestic purposes before the vacancy.

Table 4.7 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Previous tenure and use of basic amenities before the vacancy by age of building

Previous tenure and use of basic amenities before the vacancy by age of building					
Age of building/use of basic amenities before the vacancy	Previous tenure				All wholly vacant units
	Rented from Local Authority	Privately rented	Owner-occupied		
	%	%	%	%	
(i) Pre-1919					
Had all three	31	43	57		45
Lacked one or two	31 } 54	24 } 50	20 } 40		23 } 47
Lacked all three	23	27	20		24
Not known	15	7	3		8
Base = 100%: Pre-1919 wholly vacant rateable units	218 (14%)	761 (49%)	507 (33%)		1,548* (100%)
(ii) Post-1918					
Had all three	90	91	96		92
Lacked one or two	9 } 10	5 } 8	1 } 2		5 } 7
Lacked all three	1	4	2		2
Not known	1	0	2		1
Base = 100%: Post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	317 (38%)	225 (27%)	271 (32%)		838* (100%)
(iii) All ages					
Had all three	65	54	70		59
Lacked one or two	18 } 28	19 } 40	13 } 26		16 } 31
Lacked all three	10	21	13		16
Not known	7	6	3		9
Base = 100%: All wholly vacant rateable units	538 (21%)	1,009 (40%)	792 (32%)		2,510* (100%)

* Total includes those where tenure not known and also those new or used for non-domestic purposes before the vacancy.

Terraced houses formed a lower proportion (44%) of the older former private lettings than of the other two tenure groups of the same age and nearly a quarter were non-purpose built flats (Table 4.6). At least half the properties lacked one or more basic amenity.

No particular type of housing characterises the formerly privately rented property built since 1918, and only 8% lacked any basic amenity.

Because so much vacant property from this sector was old it is the features of its older housing which dominate the overall picture. Thus 20% of all formerly privately rented vacant accommodation consisted of non-purpose built flats. This compares with an average of 6% in the other sectors. Also 40% lacked one or more basic amenity compared with 27% of the other two groups combined.

c) Previously owner-occupied

About two thirds of previously owner-occupied vacant units were built before 1919, though only a third of owner-occupied properties in 1977 were of this age (Table 4.5). Very few of the vacant, previously owner-occupied units were flats, most of the older ones being terraced houses and the newer ones detached or semi-detached houses (Table 4.6). In both age groups, previously owner-occupied vacant properties were less likely than those previously rented from councils or private landlords to lack amenities (Table 4.7i and ii). This is also true when comparing figures for previously owner-occupied vacant properties of all ages with those previously privately rented — 26% of the former lacked amenities and 40% of the latter. But because, compared with previous council lettings, a larger percentage of previously owner-occupied properties were old, the overall proportions lacking

amenities for those two groups were similar — 26% and 28% respectively (Table 4.7iii).

In summary therefore, compared with vacant units from other tenures, a greater proportion of those previously privately rented were old and lacked basic amenities. Within each age group, however, former council lettings were the group most likely to lack basic amenities.

4.6 Ownership in 1977 and previous tenure

We now turn to look at what had happened to the vacant properties from the different tenure groups by the time of the LFS in 1977. As already mentioned (Section 4.3) some properties had changed from private to public ownership and vice versa. The main changes were that about 9% of previously privately-rented and 14% of previously owner-occupied properties had been acquired by Local Authorities (Table 4.8). Thus, of Local Authority owned vacant housing in 1977 only about three quarters had been council lettings when last occupied. Indeed of their pre-1919 vacant properties nearly half had been acquired while vacant (Table 4.9). Amongst privately owned vacant units on the other hand only a very small number, all pre-1919, had been acquired from Local Authorities. We shall describe here the largest group to change hands, the pre-1919 properties acquired by Local Authorities.

Pre-1919 properties acquired by Local Authorities

Of the older properties acquired by councils about half were reported to have been privately rented and half had been owner-occupied. In all, they represented 8% of properties vacant in spring 1977 (Table 4.10). The characteristics of these properties, compared with other vacant units at the time of the LFS, are shown in Tables 4.11 — 4.13. In general they were old and poor quality

Table 4.8 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Previous tenure and owner in 1977

Owner in 1977	Previous tenure		Privately rented		Owner-occupied		All wholly vacant units	
	Rented from Local Authority	%	Rented from Local Authority	%	Rented from Local Authority	%	Rented from Local Authority	%
Local Authority	99	99	9	9	14	14	29	29
Private owner	1	1	91	91	86	86	68	68
Not known	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	538 (21%)		1,009 (40%)		792 (32%)		2,510* (100%)	

* Total includes those where previous tenure not known and also those which were new or used for non-domestic purposes before the vacancy.

Table 4.9 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Age of building and previous tenure by owner

Owners/previous tenure	Previous tenure		All wholly vacant units	
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Pre-1919	Post-1918
	%	%	%	%
(i) Local Authority owned in spring 1977				
Previous tenure				
Rented from Local Auth.	54	95	72	72
Privately rented	20	3	12	12
Owner-occupied	25	1	14	14
Not known	2	1	2	2
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	400 (54%)	333 (45%)	738* (100%)	738* (100%)
(ii) Privately owned in spring 1977				
Previous tenure				
Rented from Local Auth.	0	—	0	0
Privately rented	60	43	54	54
Owner-occupied	36	53	40	40
New or non-domestic	1	2	1	1
Not known	4	2	4	4
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	1141 (67%)	504 (30%)	1698* (100%)	1698* (100%)

* Total includes those where age of building not known.

Table 4.10 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Owner in 1977 and previous tenure

Owners and previous tenure	Rateable units wholly vacant	
	%	
Local Authority owned in spring 1977		
Previous tenure		
Rented from Local Authority	21	29
Privately rented/owner-occupied	8	
Tenure not known	0	
Privately owned in spring 1977		
Previous tenure		
Rented from Local Authority	0	68
Privately rented	37	
Owner-occupied	27	
New or non-domestic	1	
Tenure not known	3	
Owner in 1977 not known	3	
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units		2510

* Total includes those where owner and/or tenure not known.

Table 4.11 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Owner in 1977, previous tenure and age of building

Age of building	Local Authority owned in 1977		Privately owned in 1977		All wholly vacant rateable units
	Previous tenure	Privately rented/owner-occupied	Previous tenure	Owner-occupied	
	%	%	%	%	%
Pre-1919	40	92	74	59	62
Post-1918	59	7	23	39	33
Age not known	1	1	3	2	5
Base = 100%: wholly rateable units	534 (21%)	195 (8%)	921 (37%)	685 (27%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where owner/tenure not known

housing. Over 90% were built before 1919, compared with about 60% of all vacant housing and only about 24% of occupied housing (Table 4.11). About 80% of them were

terraced houses (Table 4.12) and it seems that at least 60% lacked one or more basic amenity at the time of the LFS (Table 4.13).

Table 4.12 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Owner in 1977, previous tenure and type of rateable unit by age of building

Age of building/type of rateable unit	Local Authority owned in 1977			Privately owned in 1977		Total (incl. tenure not known)	All wholly vacant rateable units
	Previous tenure		Total (incl. tenure not known)	Previous tenure			
	Rented from Local Auth.	Privately rented/owner occupied		Privately rented	Owner-occupied		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Pre-1919							
House/bungalow detached	2	1	2	13	14	13	10
semi-detached	5	3	4	8	13	10	8
terraced	63	80	70	40	60	47	54
Flat/maisonette purpose built	10	4	7	7	1	5	5
non-purpose built	17	8	13	26	6	19	17
Other	3	4	4	5	5	6	5
Type not known	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Base = 100%: post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	214 (14%)	179 (12%)	400 (26%)	683 (44%)	406 (26%)	1141 (74%)	1548* (100%)
(ii) Post-1918							
House/bungalow detached	4	(4)	5	20	38	29	20
semi-detached	21	(6)	22	28	37	33	29
terraced	24	(2)	23	12	16	15	18
Flat/maisonette purpose built	49	(—)	46	28	7	17	28
non-purpose built	1	(2)	2	6	1	3	3
Other	—	(—)	—	6	1	3	2
Type not known	1	(—)	1	—	0	0	0
Base = 100%: Post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	317 (38%)	14 (2%)	333 (40%)	215 (26%)	267 (32%)	504 (60%)	838* (100%)
(iii) All ages [†]							
House/bungalow detached	3	3	3	14	23	18	13
semi-detached	14	6	12	13	22	17	15
terraced	40	74	49	33	43	37	41
Flat/maisonette purpose built	33	4	25	12	3	8	13
non-purpose built	8	8	8	21	4	14	12
Other	1	4	2	5	3	5	4
Type not known	0	—	0	1	1	1	1
Base = 100%: all wholly vacant rateable units	534 (21%)	195 (8%)	738 (29%)	921 (37%)	685 (27%)	1698 (68%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where owner/tenure not known.

† Including age not known.

Table 4.13 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Owner in 1977, previous tenure and use of basic amenities at the time of the LFS by age of building

Age of building/use of basic amenities at the time of the LFS	Local Authority owned in 1977			Privately owned in 1977			All wholly vacant rateable units
	Previous tenure		Total (incl. tenure not-known)	Previous tenure		Total (incl. tenure not known)	
	Rented from Local Auth.	Privately rented/owner occupied		Privately rented	Owner-occupied		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Pre-1919							
Had all three Amenities being installed	30	19	25	47	65	52	45
Lacked one or two	8	4	7	6	9	7	7
Lacked all three	23 } 48	23 } 59	23 } 53	19 } 42	12 } 25	16 } 36	18 } 40
Not known	25	36	30	23	13	20	22
	13	18	16	5	1	5	8
Base = 100%: pre-1919 wholly vacant rateable units	214 (14%)	179 (12%)	400 (26%)	683 (44%)	406 (26%)	1141 (74%)	1548* (100%)
(ii) Post-1918							
Had all three Amenities being installed	87	(11)	86	92	96	95	91
Lacked one or two	5	(2)	5	2	—	1	3
Lacked all three	7 } 7	(—)	7 } 7	2 } 5	1 } 2	2 } 3	3 } 5
Not known	0	(1)	1	3	2	1	1
	1	(—)	1	1	2	1	1
Base = 100%: post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	317 (38%)	14 (2%)	333 (40%)	215 (26%)	267 (32%)	504 (60%)	838* (100%)
(iii) All ages							
Had all three Amenities being installed	64	23	52	57	77	64	59
Lacked one or two	6	5	6	5	5	5	6
Lacked all three	14 } 24	22 } 55	16 } 32	15 } 33	7 } 16	11 } 25	12 } 27
Not known	10	33	17	18	8	14	14
	6	17	9	5	2	4	9
Base = 100%: All wholly vacant rateable units	534 (21%)	195 (8%)	738 (29%)	921 (37%)	685 (27%)	1698 (68%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where owner/tenure not known

Later chapters will show whether these properties were acquired by Local Authorities for demolition or renovation.

Tables 4.11 — 4.13 suggest that a sizeable proportion of the former council let vacant accommodation owned by Local Authorities in 1977 was of a similar kind to that which they had acquired whilst vacant; namely, older terraced houses, lacking amenities. It seems probable that much of this had also been acquired from the private sector but before it became vacant. Although Local Authorities were first given effective power to build housing for letting in 1890¹, very few such dwellings were actually built before the first World War.²

As changes in the ownership of vacant properties by spring 1977 were mainly in one direction — private to public — and involved mostly pre-1919, terraced, poorer quality housing, the effect of including those properties in Local Authority vacant housing in 1977 is fairly marked. This is particularly so as these acquired properties were more often pre-1919 and lacking basic amenities than the other Local Authority vacant units, those previously

council let (Tables 4.11 — 4.13). The effect of their loss, however, from the private sector tenure groups is less considerable in that the characteristics of the vacant units still privately owned in 1977, are largely similar to those which were previously privately owned and already described in Section 4.5. Tables 4.11 — 4.13 provide the details of the 37% of vacant properties privately owned in 1977 which were previously privately rented and of the 27% privately owned, previously owner-occupied.

4.7 Conclusions

Perhaps the most striking feature of the evidence in this chapter is that relating to formerly privately rented vacant housing. It comprised the largest single group of vacant properties (40%) and a much greater proportion than do current private lettings amongst occupied housing (13%). Judged by its age and possession of basic amenities, formerly privately rented housing was of poorer quality than that which had previously been owner-occupied or rented from Local Authorities. The poorest quality vacant housing of all in these terms, however, was the 8% which had been acquired from the private sector by Local Authorities, while vacant. There is, moreover, reason to believe that at least some of the older poor quality, Local Authority vacant properties which had been rented by council tenants immediately prior to the vacancy had also been acquired from the private sector in earlier years. Some of these properties were derelict and/or boarded up and later chapters will show whether such housing was destined for demolition or renovation (see Chapter 6 Table 6.2 and Chapter 7 Section 7.6).

¹ Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890

² The 44th Annual Report of the Local Government Board, Part II (Housing); Parliamentary Papers 1916 Vol XII quotes the figure of 20,000 dwellings built by Local Authorities before 1914 under Part III of the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890 as extended in applicability by the Housing, Town Planning, etc. Act, 1909.

Annex: Regional distribution

As was the case in England as a whole, disproportionately large numbers of the vacant properties in every region were previously privately rented accommodation (36% — 44%). Correspondingly properties from other tenure groups tended to account for a smaller proportion of vacant accommodation than of occupied housing in 1977.

This was so in every region except in the GLC area where council housing was somewhat more likely to be vacant than in other regions, accounting for roughly the same

proportion — a third — of both vacant and occupied accommodation (Table 4.14).

From Table 4.15 it can be seen that units acquired by Local Authorities, while empty, formed a larger proportion of the vacant properties in the northern regions (12%) than in other regions (5% — 7%). Thus, although only a third of all vacant units were in the north, over a half of those acquired by councils were in that part of the country (Table 4.16).

Table 4.14 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Region and (a) previous tenure of vacant units, (b) tenure in 1977 of occupied units

Tenure	Region				All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	
	%	%	%	%	%
(a) VPS — vacant units					
Previous tenure					
Rented from Local Authority	21	32	14	20	21
Privately rented	36	42	44	42	40
Owner-occupied	35	16	39	32	32
New or non-domestic	1	1	1	0	1
Tenure not known	7	8	2	6	6
<i>Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units</i>	<i>862 (34%)</i>	<i>448 (18%)</i>	<i>448 (18%)</i>	<i>752 (30%)</i>	<i>2510 (100%)</i>
(b) NDHS — occupied units					
Tenure in 1977					
Rented from Local Authority	34	33	26	30	31
Privately rented	12	19	13	12	13
Owner-occupied	54	48	62	58	56
<i>Base = 100%: wholly occupied rateable units where tenure known</i>	<i>21883 (32%)</i>	<i>9420 (14%)</i>	<i>14535 (21%)</i>	<i>22952 (33%)</i>	<i>68790 (100%)</i>

Table 4.15 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Region, owner in 1977 and previous tenure by age of building

Age and owner	Region				All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	
	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Pre-1919					
Local Authority owned in 1977; previously rented from Local Authority	12	30	6	10	14
privately rented/owner-occupied	18	10	9	6	12
Privately owned in 1977; previously					
privately rented	37	44	50	49	44
owner-occupied	28	12	34	28	26
Others - non-domestic and owner/tenure not known	4	4	1	6	4
Base = 100%: Pre-1919 wholly vacant rateable units	575 (37%)	275 (18%)	230 (15%)	468 (30%)	1548 (100%)
(ii) Post-1918					
Local Authority owned in 1977; previously rented from Local Authority	47	42	24	38	38
privately rented/owner-occupied	-	1	3	2	2
Privately owned in 1977; previously					
privately rented	17	30	34	24	26
owner-occupied	32	22	37	34	32
Others - new, non-domestic and owner/tenure not known	4	5	2	2	3
Base = 100%: Post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	239 (29%)	142 (17%)	206 (25%)	251 (30%)	838 (100%)
(iii) All ages*					
Local Authority owned in 1977; previously rented from Local Authority	21	32	14	19	21
privately rented/owner-occupied	12	7	6	5	8
Privately owned in 1977; previously					
privately rented	30	38	42	40	37
owner-occupied	28	14	35	29	27
Others - new non-domestic and owner/tenure not known	8	10	3	7	7
Base = 100%: all wholly vacant rateable units	862 (34%)	448 (18%)	448 (18%)	752 (30%)	2510 (100%)

* Including age not known.

Table 4.16 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Owner in 1977, previous tenure and region by age of building

Age of building/Region	Local Authority owned in 1977		Privately owned in 1977		All wholly vacant rateable units
	Previous tenure		Previous tenure		
	Rented from Local Authority	Privately rented/owner-occupied	Privately rented	Owner-occupied	
(i) Pre-1919					
North, Yorks/Humb					
North West	32	58	31	40	37
GLC	39	14	18	8	18
South East (excluding GLC)	6	11	17	19	15
Midlands, East Anglia					
South West	22	16	34	33	30
Base = 100%: Pre-1919 wholly vacant rateable units	214 (14%)	179 (12%)	683 (44%)	406 (26%)	1548* (100%)
(ii) Post-1918					
North, Yorks/Humb					
North West	35	(-)	19	28	28
GLC	19	(2)	20	12	17
South East (excluding GLC)	16	(6)	33	28	25
Midlands, East Anglia					
South West	30	(6)	28	32	30
Base = 100%: Post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	317 (38%)	14 (2%)	215 (26%)	267 (32%)	838* (100%)
(iii) all ages⁺					
North, Yorks/Humb					
North West	34	53	28	36	34
GLC	27	15	18	9	18
South East (excluding GLC)	12	13	21	23	18
Midlands, East Anglia					
South West	27	18	33	32	30
Base = 100%: all wholly vacant rateable units	534 (21%)	195 (8%)	921 (37%)	685 (27%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where owner and/or tenure not known.

+ Including ages not known.

5 How long had the properties been vacant?

5.1 Introduction

We shall now look at how long the properties had been vacant at the time of their identification by the LFS in spring 1977 and shall show, for example, the proportions that had been vacant for less than 3 months, less than 1 year and so on. Policy regarding vacant housing is sometimes related to this type of information. For example, local authorities are able to levy up to 100% rates on property which has been unoccupied for more than 3 months.¹

The information about duration of vacancies will be examined in relation to other characteristics of the vacant properties, including their tenure, to find out whether certain kinds of accommodation were liable to have been vacant for longer than others.

Regional distributions are given at the end of the chapter.

5.2 Duration of vacancies at the time of the LFS

Roughly 60% of the properties found vacant in spring 1977 had been empty for less than a year, 28% having been empty for less than 3 months. Some properties had been unoccupied for periods considerably longer than this — as many as 21% for 2 years or more and 7% had been empty for over 5 years (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Length of vacancy at the time of the LFS

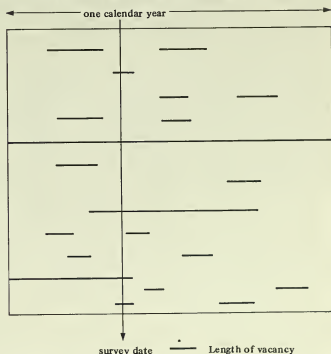
Length of vacancy at the time of the LFS		Wholly vacant rateable units
		%
Less than 1 week		4
1 week less than 4 weeks		10
4 weeks " 8 weeks		8
8 weeks " 3 months		6
3 months " 6 months		15
6 months " 1 year		15
1 year " 2 years		13
2 years " 5 years		5
5 years " 10 years		2
10 years or more		6
Not known		6
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units		2510

Vacancy length is of course a continuum: at one extreme, accommodation may be empty for an hour or so between occupants, whilst at the other it may be unoccupied for many years. We suggested in the introductory chapter that a survey lasting some weeks as opposed to a census carried out at one point in time is likely to omit some short vacancies, those lasting less than, say one week. There is, however, another reason why a cross-section of vacancies

existing at one point of time, even if all have been identified, is not a guide to the general length of vacancies during a given period and in particular over-represents the long vacancies which lie in that period.

This can be shown if we imagine the durations of vacancies to be represented by different lengths of string laid out in parallel lines on a rectangular table as in Figure 1: the length of the table representing a period of time; say one year. If a strip of sticky tape, to represent the date of the survey is placed at right angles to the pieces of string anywhere on the table, a sample of pieces will stick to the tape. This sample, however, will include a greater proportion of long pieces than occur on the table as a whole because long pieces have more chance than short ones of being picked up, a piece running the full length of the table being certain of selection. In the illustration, 3 out of the 5 pieces of string (vacancies) picked up by the tape (survey) are long but only 3 out of all the 20 pieces are long.

Figure 5.1 A sample derived from a cross-section of vacancies



Thus whilst the survey accurately represents the number of vacancies at the time it occurred and their duration so far, it does not show how long vacancies in general last. That would require a longitudinal study. As a result of this constraint, it is permissible to make statements based on survey data such as "most vacancies had lasted at least

¹ Department of the Environment Circular 76/77, *Better use of vacant and under-occupied housing* (para 1.20).

Table 5.2 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Age of building and length of vacancy at the time of the LFS

Length of vacancy at time of the LFS	Age of building		Total %
	Pre-1919 %	Post-1918 %	
Less than 1 month	9 } 19	26 } 46	14 } 28
1 month less than 3 months	11 }	20 }	13 }
3 months " " 6 months	14 }	18 }	15 }
6 months " " 1 year	17 }	14 }	15 }
1 year " " 2 years	18 }	12 }	15 }
2 years " " 5 years	18 }	7 }	13 }
5 years " " 10 years	7 } 29	1 } 8	5 } 21
10 years or more	3 }	0 }	2 }
Not known	4	1	6
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	1548	838	2510*

* Total includes age of building not known.

3 months at the time they were identified"; but *not* statements like "most vacancies last at least 3 months".

5.3 Which types of accommodation had been vacant the longest?

It is to be expected that old and poor quality housing remains vacant longer than other housing and this seems to be the case. Pre-1919 properties and those lacking basic amenities had, on average, been vacant for longer periods than newer properties and those with all amenities. The differences are best shown at the extremes of the scale of lengths of vacancies. Of pre-1919 properties, 19% had been vacant for less than 3 months compared with 46% of post-1918 units. Conversely a higher proportion of pre-1919 units than newer ones had been vacant for 5 years or more — 11% compared with 2% (Table 5.2). A similar pattern of lengths of vacancies is seen when comparing vacant properties without and those with basic amenities (Table 5.3).

The group of properties vacant for 5 years or more were predominantly old, poor quality housing: 90% were built before 1919, nearly half dating from before 1870, compared with a fifth amongst all vacant units: and 60% lacked at least one basic amenity, twice the proportion lacking amenities amongst vacant properties as a whole.

Within each age group of properties, the period for which

the property had been vacant varied little with the type of rateable unit. Thus, although amongst properties of all ages, semi-detached houses and purpose built flats had, on average, been empty for shorter periods than other types of unit, this may be largely related to the fact that they tended to be newer properties. Types more common amongst the pre-1919 properties than amongst newer ones were those empty for longer periods (Table 5.4).

There are, however, two kinds of property which, although involving relatively small numbers of vacant units seem to have been empty for longer periods than others in the same broad age group. These are detached houses, particularly those in the pre-1919 age group, and properties in the residual category of 'other types', most of which were rateable units containing both domestic and non-domestic accommodation, such as shops and flats. Amongst pre-1919 vacant properties, 62% of detached houses and 70% of the residual group had been vacant for a year or longer compared with no more than 47% of any of the other types of unit. The vacant pre-1919 detached houses were almost all privately-owned. They tended to be older than other types of pre-1919 vacant units: nearly three-quarters of them dated from before 1870 compared with about a quarter of other pre-1919 vacant properties.

To sum up: old housing lacking amenities had on the whole been vacant for longer than other properties but, within age groups, there were few differences between types of rateable unit.

5.4 What was the previous tenure of properties vacant for different lengths of time?

Former council lettings had on average been vacant for shorter periods than properties in the private sector. This was most marked in post-1918 housing, amongst which 65% of former council lettings had been vacant for less than 3 months compared with 31% and 40% of privately owned previously privately rented and previously owner-occupied properties respectively (Table 5.5)

The council properties acquired from the private sector while vacant, on the other hand, had on average been vacant for longer than other properties. Of the acquired properties built before 1919, only 9% had been vacant for

Table 5.3 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Use of three basic amenities and length of vacancy at the time of the LFS

Length of vacancy at time of the LFS	Use of three basic amenities				
	Had all three	Being installed	Lacked one or two	Lacked all three	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 1 month	20 } 37	7 }	7 }	5 }	14 }
1 month less than 3 mths	17 }	11 }	10 }	7 }	13 }
3 months " " 6 mths	16 }	12 }	22 }	12 }	15 }
6 months " " 1 year	16 }	18 }	15 }	13 }	15 }
1 year " " 2 years	14 }	19 }	17 }	18 }	15 }
2 years " " 5 years	11 }	16 }	19 }	18 }	13 }
5 years " " 10 years	3 } 14	6 }	6 }	14 }	5 }
10 years or more	1 }	3 }	4 }	8 }	2 }
Not known	2	8	2	4	6
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	1480 (59%)	136 (5%)	305 (12%)	364 (14%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where amenities not known.

Table 5.4 Wholly vacant rateable units
Type of rateable unit and length of vacancy at time of LFS by age of building

Age of building and length of vacancy at time of the LFS	Type of wholly vacant rateable unit						Total
	Detached house	Semi-detached house	Terraced house	Purpose built flat	non-purpose built	Other types	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Pre-1919							
Less than 3 months	12	20	20	22	24	13	19
3 months less than 1 year	22	30	35	40	27	8	31
1 year " " 2 years	21	18	18	14	15	16	18
2 years " " 5 years	19	16	16	17	11	27	18
5 years or more	19	10	9	4	28	28	11
Not known	4	3	2	4	6	9	4
Base = 100%: Pre-1919 wholly vacant rateable units	154 (10%)	127 (8%)	829 (54%)	81 (5%)	268 (17%)	77 (5%)	1548 (100%)
(ii) Post-1918							
Less than 3 months	33	49	55	51	(6)	(4)	46
3 months less than 1 year	40	32	30	26	(8)	(5)	32
1 year " " 2 years	16	11	9	12	(5)	(2)	12
2 years " " 5 years	10	5	3	8	(2)	(3)	7
5 years or more	1	2	1	0	(1)	(3)	2
Not known	—	0	1	2	(—)	(—)	1
Base = 100%: Post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	164 (20%)	240 (29%)	154 (18%)	239 (28%)	22 (3%)	14 (2%)	838 (100%)
(iii) All ages							
Less than 3 months	22	37	25	42	22	15	28
3 months less than 1 year	31	30	34	28	26	14	30
1 year " " 2 years	18	14	16	12	15	13	15
2 years " " 5 years	15	10	14	10	16	22	13
5 years or more	10	4	7	1	10	25	7
Not known	5	5	4	5	11	11	6
Base = 100%: All wholly vacant rateable units	336 (13%)	384 (15%)	1021 (41%)	331 (13%)	314 (12%)	100 (4%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where type of rateable unit not known

less than 3 months compared with about a fifth of other pre-1919 properties. Nearly two thirds of them had been vacant for over a year (Table 5.5)

In the private sector, there were only small differences in the overall distributions of vacancy length between the formerly privately rented and owner-occupied properties. Amongst the pre-1919 properties there was virtually no difference between the two tenures. Amongst newer properties, however, previously owner-occupied accommodation was somewhat more likely than that previously privately rented to have been vacant for only a short time — less than 6 months (Table 5.5).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the survey includes vacant properties that were derelict and/or boarded up and some of the properties vacant for longer periods were of this type, often awaiting demolition (see Chapter 6 Tables 6.2 and 6.8).

5.5 Properties vacant for short periods

The main concern of the survey is with long vacancies, those lasting, say, more than 3 months. It is however, worth paying some attention to shorter vacancies, in part because they may account for a considerable proportion of housing time lost through vacancy. In addition as pointed out earlier, some vacancies — those lasting only a day or so, are likely to have been so short as to be undetected by a survey and it seems probable that many vacancies between moves are of that type. It is therefore worth asking firstly whether the short vacancies which

were identified in the survey, were in fact, 'turn-round vacancies', that is vacancies due to the normal movement of households, and secondly, if so, why most of them lasted so long — more than a few hours or days.

As far as possible, the circumstances keeping these properties vacant will be examined in the next chapter, but it is useful to begin by finding out whether housing subject to short vacancies clearly differs from other vacant accommodation on the one hand, so that the brevity of the vacancy is to some extent predictable, and on the other hand, whether such housing resembles occupied housing more closely than it does other vacant property. If so, it might be inferred that the short-term vacancies are in fact prolonged 'turn-round' vacancies.

To answer these questions, it is possible to use not only what is known of the duration of vacancies until the time they were identified, but also the evidence from the follow-up (VPS) survey that 5% of the vacancies in the sample ended within 8 weeks of starting; that is, their total length was short. It is these which will be regarded here as short term vacancies and of which we shall ask: are they prolonged 'turn-round' vacancies?

It can be seen from Table 5.6, that properties vacant for a total of less than 8 weeks were more likely than others to have been built since 1918 and to have all three basic amenities. In this respect they are, in fact, more like occupied properties than other vacant accommodation.

Table 5.5 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Owner in 1977, previous tenure and type of rateable unit by age or building

Age of building and length of vacancy at time of the LFS	Local Authority owned in 1977			Privately owned in 1977			All wholly vacant rateable units
	Previous tenure		Total (incl. tenure not known)	Previous tenure		Total (incl. tenure not known)	
	Rented from Local Auth.	Privately rented/owner occupied		Privately rented	Owner-occupied		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Pre-1919							
Less than 3 months	19	9	15	23	20	21	19
3 months less than 6 months	19	14	16	12	16	13	14
6 months " " 1 year	23	13	18	16	18	16	17
1 year " " 2 years	19	27	22	15	19	16	18
2 years " " 5 years	13	25	18	18	16	18	18
5 years or more	5	11	8	12	10	12	11
Not known	2	1	2	5	1	4	4
Base = 100%; Pre-1919 wholly vacant rateable units	214 (14%)	179 (12%)	400 (26%)	683 (44%)	406 (26%)	1141 (74%)	1548* (100%)
(ii) Post-1918							
Less than 3 months	65	(2)	63	31	40	35	46
3 months less than 6 months	14	(2)	14	15	24	20	18
6 months " " 1 year	5	(4)	8	24	14	18	14
1 year " " 2 years	10	(4)	10	16	12	14	12
2 years " " 5 years	3	(2)	3	9	8	9	7
5 years or more	—	(—)	—	4	1	3	2
Not known	—	(—)	—	1	1	2	1
Base = 100%; Post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	317 (38%)	14 (2%)	333 (40%)	215 (26%)	267 (32%)	504 (60%)	838* (100%)
(iii) units of all ages							
Less than 3 months	46	9	37	24	28	25	28
3 months less than 6 months	16	14	15	13	19	15	15
6 months " " 1 year	14	14	14	18	16	16	15
1 year " " 2 years	13	27	17	15	16	15	15
2 years " " 5 years	7	24	11	15	13	15	13
5 years or more	2	10	5	10	6	9	7
Not known	1	2	1	4	2	5	6
Base = 100%; all wholly vacant rateable units	534 (21%)	195 (8%)	738 (29%)	921 (37%)	685 (27%)	1698 (68%)	2510* (100%)

* Total includes those where owner/tenure not known.

In their previous tenure, however, they differ both from other vacant and occupied housing: a very much greater proportion of the properties vacant for under 8 weeks were council-owned and formerly council let built since the First World War. As will be suggested in the next chapter, many of this particular group were probably 'turn-round' vacancies prolonged by the need to redecorate the property between tenancies.

Since housing vacant for short periods seems to differ from other vacant property in general, can it be distinguished, at the outset of the vacancy, from housing which will be empty for longer periods? Whilst the question could only be fully answered by a longitudinal study, a comparison of short term vacant properties with others which became vacant at around the same time (just prior to the LFS) but which lasted longer, should provide some indication of the probable answer. In doing this we use the survey data to approximate a longitudinal approach.

In Table 5.7 only 'recent' vacancies, that is those which had arisen within the 8 weeks prior to the LFS, are shown. 'Short-term' vacancies, those which lasted a total of less than 8 weeks, accounted for a quarter of the 'recent'

vacancies. The properties concerned are compared with the others which were to remain empty for longer.

It can be seen that the short-term vacant properties do differ from the others. A greater proportion were new, had amenities and were former council tenancies; and none were Local Authority pre-1919 properties. As might be expected, the recently vacant properties which were to remain vacant for longer than 8 weeks were more similar than short-term vacant properties to those that had already been vacant for longer than 8 weeks at the time of the LFS.

Thus, in so far as can be inferred from the survey findings, it seems that vacancies arising in newer council housing are more likely than others to be brief (less than 8 weeks). Even so, nearly 60% of the recently arising vacancies found in newer council housing lasted more than eight weeks (Table 5.8). But because an unknown number of vacancies beginning in the same 8 week period must have ended before the identifying survey (LFS), it is not possible to show the extent to which short term vacancies can actually be predicted from the characteristics of the properties at the time they arise.

Table 5.6 Comparison of rateable units vacant for short periods (a total of less than 8 weeks) with those vacant longer and with occupied properties, in terms of the age of building, basic amenities, owner and previous tenure

	VPS			NDHS
	Wholly vacant rateable units			Wholly occupied rateable units
	Total length of vacancy		All vacancies	
	Less than 8 weeks	8 weeks or more		
	%	%	%	%
Age of building				
Pre-1919	26	66	62	24
Post-1918	74	32	33	68
Not known	—	2	5	8
				(a)
Use of basic amenities				
Had all three	91	59	59	94
Amenities being installed	1	6	5	—
Lacks one or two	5	13	12	4
Lacks all three	3	16	14	1
Not known	—	6	9	0
				(b)
Owner in 1977 and previous tenure				
Local Authority owned and previously:—				
rented from Local Authority	52	20	21	31
in private sector	—	9	8	—
Privately owned and previously:—				
privately rented	25	38	37	13
owner-occupied	21	28	27	56
Others including not known	2	4	7	—
				(c)
Owner in 1977 and age of building				
Local Authority owned				
pre-1919	1	17	16	1
post-1918	53	11	13	27
Privately owned				
pre-1919	25	48	46	23
post-1918	21	21	20	41
Not known	—	3	5	7
				(c)
Base = 100%: rateable units	137	2297	2510*	a - 81187
				b - 68050
				c - 68790

* Total includes those where length of vacancy not known

Table 5.7 'Recent vacancies' - rateable units vacant less than 8 weeks before the LFS:
Comparison of those lasting a total of less than 8 weeks with those lasting longer, in terms of the age of building, basic amenities, owner and previous tenure

	Rateable units vacant less than 8 weeks before the LFS		
	Total length of vacancy		
	Less than 8 weeks	8 weeks or more	All 'recent' vacancies
	%	%	%
Age of building			
Pre-1919	26	48	42
Post-1918	74	51	57
Not known	-	1	1
Use of basic amenities			
Had all three	91	77	81
Amenities being installed	1	4	4
Lacks one or two	5	8	8
Lacks all three	3	5	4
Not known	-	5	4
Owner in 77 and previous tenure			
Local Authority owned and previously:-			
rented from Local Auth.	52	32	37
in private sector	-	3	2
Privately owned and previously:-			
privately rented	25	32	30
owner-occupied	21	31	29
Others including not known	2	1	1
Owner in 77 and age of building			
Local Authority owned			
pre-1919	1	11	8
post-1918	53	25	32
Privately owned			
pre-1919	25	37	34
post-1918	21	26	25
Not known	-	1	1
Base = 100%: rateable units with vacancy arising 'recently'	137	411	548

Table 5.8 Percentage of 'recent' vacancies[†] which lasted a total of less than 8 weeks

	Local Authority owned in 1977			Privately owned in 1977			All 'recent' vacancies
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	All ages	Pre-1919	Post-1918	All ages	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Vacancies lasted a total of less than 8 weeks	-	41	33	18	21	19	25
Base = 100%: all 'recent' vacancies	43	174	217	185	136	324	548*

* Total includes those where owner not known

† 'Recent' vacancy = vacancy starting during the 8 weeks prior to its identification in the LFS

Annex: Regional distribution

Table 5.9 shows only small regional differences between the overall distributions of length of vacancy. The most marked differences are amongst pre-1919 properties. For example, in the South East (excluding GLC), which was

incidentally the region where vacancies were least likely, a relatively high proportion, 36%, had been vacant for 2 years or more. This compares with 23% in the GLC and 25% in the northern regions.

Table 5.9 Wholly vacant rateable units:
Region and length of vacancy at the time of the LFS by age of building

Age of building/length of vacancy at time of the LFS	Region				All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	
	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Pre-1919					
Less than 3 months	19	22	20	18	19
3 mths less than 6 mths	14	18	10	14	14
6 mths " " 1 year	18	14	14	18	17
1 year " " 2 years	20	16	19	14	18
2 years " " 5 years	17	15	24	17	18
5 years or more	8 } 25	7 } 23	13 } 36	15 } 32	11 } 29
Not known	4	7	—	4	4
Base = 100%: Pre-1919 wholly vacant rateable units	573 (37%)	275 (18%)	230 (15%)	468 (30%)	1548 (100%)
(ii) Post-1918					
Less than 3 months	52	38	41	51	46
3 mths less than 6 mths	19	18	13	22	18
6 mths " " 1 year	12	18	18	11	14
1 year " " 2 years	10	12	16	12	12
2 years " " 5 years	6 } 7	8 } 11	9 } 13	4 } 5	2 } 8
5 years or more	1	2	4	0	2
Not known	0	4	1	—	1
Base = 100%: Post-1918 wholly vacant rateable units	239 (28%)	142 (17%)	206 (25%)	251 (30%)	838 (100%)
(iii) All ages (incl age not known)					
Less than 3 months	27	26	29	28	28
3 mths less than 6 mths	14	17	11	16	15
6 mths " " 1 year	16	14	16	15	15
1 year " " 2 years	17	14	17	13	15
2 years " " 5 years	13	12	16	12	13
5 years or more	6 } 19	5 } 18	8 } 25	10 } 22	7 } 21
Not known	6	11	3	5	6
Base = 100%: all wholly vacant rateable units	862 (34%)	448 (18%)	448 (18%)	752 (30%)	2510 (100%)

6 Why is housing vacant?

6.1 Introduction

People move home for various reasons, only some of which are to do with the accommodation, and for the most part they are immediately or quickly replaced by new occupants. It is therefore not the cause of the initial move from the property which is likely to explain vacancy so much as the reasons it remained unoccupied, and, in particular, the circumstances maintaining the vacancy in spring 1977 when it was identified as vacant. Such circumstances can be derived from the combination of reported facts about the properties, the owners' plans for them and the difficulties they had in implementing their plans around the time the properties were found to be vacant.

Earlier chapters have shown that old and poor quality housing is particularly liable to be vacant, which suggests that explanations for vacancy should first be sought in the condition of the properties.

6.2 Missing information

Information about the vacant properties was obtained from a variety of informants: someone who had moved into the accommodation since the time it was first identified as vacant, or anyone living near or connected with the properties who claimed to know something about them, and owners. This means that basic facts are available about the great majority of vacant housing in the sample. Only the owners, however, could say what they themselves planned to do with the properties, and what difficulties they had encountered in carrying out their plans, but in many instances no owner was interviewed. This was usually because none could be traced, sometimes because when traced the owner refused to be interviewed, and in the case of vacancies which had ended by the time of the follow-up survey and which had lasted for less than eight weeks, because of the decision not to contact the owner if he was other than the occupier. In addition, in the interest of simplicity the 45 partly vacant properties, as in earlier chapters, are excluded from the discussion in this chapter. As a result information derived from owners of the properties in spring 1977 is missing for 784 rateable units out of a total of 2555 (31%) and for 751 out of 2510 (30%) wholly vacant units. Information from those who owned the properties at the start of the vacancies, which will be used from time to time, is absent for as many as 948 out of a total of 2510 (38%) and, from owners at the time of follow-up, for 689 out of the 2510 (27%) wholly vacant properties.

Any assumptions made about the missing information are open to question, but again for the sake of simplicity it will be assumed for most of this chapter and in all the

relevant tables that the properties for which no owner was interviewed were similar to the remainder. We shall point out in the conclusions how the main findings might differ if other assumptions are made, and the number of 'not knowns' will be shown underneath each table.

6.3 The condition of the property

a) *Properties to be demolished*

The first point of interest is that some 15% of the properties vacant in spring 1977 were to be demolished; that is, at the time of follow-up for the Vacant Property Survey they had either been demolished, or the owner said that demolition was planned. In most cases (74%) this outcome had been intended from the beginning of the vacancy.

The great majority (80%) of the properties involved had been built before 1900, and only 8% dated from after the First World War (Table 6.1). Most of them (70%) were terraced houses built before 1919, and, in fact, over a quarter of the vacant terraced houses and nearly a third of those built before 1919 were to be demolished.

Most properties in the group belonged to Local Authorities at the time they were found to be vacant*. About three quarters were Local Authority-owned and built before the First World War. More than half (55%) of the older council-owned properties were destined for demolition (Table 6.2) and even more (63%) of those which had been acquired from private owners since the beginnings of the vacancies. It is therefore apparent that the excessive numbers of older, Local Authority properties amongst those which were vacant is largely due to acquisitions before or during the vacancies, for the purpose of demolition.

The reason for demolition most commonly given by owners was that the site or area was to be redeveloped for residential purposes: half were to be destroyed on this account and a third it was said because they were unfit — reasons which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. 14% were to be demolished for non-residential redevelopment but few of these had been built since 1900. As will be shown later, there is other evidence that most of the property to be demolished was of poor quality (see Table 6.5).

At the time of the follow-up survey, which took place between three and eight months after the vacancies were identified, only a third of the properties due for

* Local Authority-owned properties include those which were being acquired under Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) at the time.

Table 6.1 Percentages of vacant properties to be demolished, according to their characteristics

Characteristics	To be demolished	All wholly vacant properties
	%	%
Age of building		
Pre-1919	90	62
Post-1918	8	33
Not known	2	5
Age of building and type of rateable unit		
Pre-1919		
House/bungalow		
detached	3	6
semi-detached	3	5
terraced	70	33
Flat/maisonette		
purpose built	4	3
non-purpose built	7	11
Others	3	4
Post-1918		
House/bungalow		
detached	1	6
semi-detached	0	10
terraced	1	6
Flat/maisonette		
purpose built	6	10
non-purpose built	—	1
Others	—	1
Owner in 1977 and age of building:		
Local Authority owned		
Pre-1919	74	16
Post-1918	7	13
Privately owned		
Pre-1919	16	46
Post-1918	1	20
Not known	2	5
<i>Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units</i>	<i>268</i>	<i>2510</i>

demolition had actually been demolished, and it will be seen later many had been vacant for over a year before the spring of 1977. Why, then, did demolition take so long to accomplish? Only Local Authorities (who owned most of the properties to be demolished) were asked whether there had been delays, and nearly two thirds said that there had been delays. For the most part these were ascribed to the time taken to acquire and evacuate surrounding property, which had contributed to nearly two thirds of the reported delays.

b) *Building work*

Renovation is an alternative to demolition for old housing in poor condition and a means of maintaining and ultimately prolonging the life of newer and better quality housing. Building work itself is not necessarily an adequate explanation for vacancy, since many occupiers remain in their accommodation whilst it is being extensively altered, and in fact, some of the building work going on in the vacant properties was of a rather minor kind. Nevertheless once an owner has decided to embark on building work during a vacancy it can be seen as the cause of its prolongation: only about 10% of the properties which underwent building work were reoccupied whilst work was in progress, and in the great majority of cases it was an owner-occupier who moved in.

In the present context, we are concerned only with building work which can be regarded as responsible for the vacancy around the time it was identified; that is work being or about to be undertaken by the owner at that time. 34% of the properties were affected including 12% in which work had not yet begun. [The figure of 34% includes 4% in which building work had been completed by the time of the LFS. In well over half the cases the work had ended less than 3 months previously. It is therefore reasonable to regard the vacancy as due to the aftermath of the building work.] Building work was more or less equally common in newer and older properties and in council and privately owned housing, but the totals conceal more than they reveal. Amongst privately-owned housing it was the older property which was most likely to be affected by building work, whilst the reverse is true for council housing (Table 6.3). In fact older council housing was the least and new council housing the most likely to be undergoing building work. This is largely because over half the pre-1919 council property was to be demolished. When such buildings are excluded, a rather greater proportion of the older than the newer Local Authority housing was affected by building work (Table 6.4).

Building work necessarily takes time to arrange and accomplish, but owners of over half (52%) of the vacant properties involved considered that the process had been unduly prolonged. Of these 20% attributed the delay at least in part to the time taken to get planning permission, 8% to problems of obtaining improvement grants and 6% (all Local Authorities or housing associations) to the need to get DOE approval. Of course in some cases the work for which planning permission was sought may have been controversial, and some of the requests for grants may have been inappropriate; moreover, only a very different kind of enquiry could show whether applications for planning permission, improvement grants and DOE approval do in fact take longer than necessary to handle. However even if all the cases reported definitely involved unjustified delays due to such applications, only 14% of properties undergoing building work and 5% of all vacancies could be said to have been prolonged for such reasons. The specific problem of getting planning permission also came up occasionally in the context of difficulties in disposing of the accommodation, and if all references are included, then 4% of the properties were being kept empty partly for this reason. Nearly all the other reported causes of delays in starting and completing building work had to do with finance or the processes of finding builders, getting estimates or tenders, and the quality or slow progress of the work. It is, however, of some interest that a quarter of the building work delays in council housing were attributed to the need to evacuate surrounding dwellings which were also to be renovated. The corresponding figure for private housing was 9%.

c) *Redecoration, cleaning and minor repairs*

In addition to the 34% of vacant properties being renovated, the disposal of a further 3% was said to have been delayed because of the need to redecorate or clean them or to carry out minor repairs. [Informants were asked whether and what building work had been carried

Table 6.2 Percentages of wholly vacant properties which were to be demolished, by age and ownership

	Local Authority owned			Privately owned			All built		TOTAL
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To be demolished	55	8	35	6	1	4	21	4	15
Other	45	92	65	94	99	96	79	96	85
Base = 100%: all wholly vacant rateable units	361	252	613	783	343	1126	1144	595	1759*
No answers (excluded from bases)	39	81	120	358	161	519	404*	243*	751*

* Figures include cases for which ownership &/or age were unknown.

Table 6.3 Percentages of wholly vacant properties affected by building work by age and ownership

	Local Authority owned			Privately owned			All built		TOTAL
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Affected by building work	24	46	33	39	27	35	34	35	34
Others	76	54	67	61	73	65	66	65	66
Base = 100%: all wholly vacant rateable units	361	252	613	783	343	1126	1144	595	1759*
No answers (excluded from bases)	39	81	120	358	161	519	404*	243*	751*

* Figures include cases for which use and/or ownership is unknown.

Table 6.4 Percentages of wholly vacant properties not to be demolished which were affected by building work, by age and ownership

	Local Authority owned			Privately owned			All built		TOTAL
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Affected by building work	54	49	51	41	27	36	43	36	40
Others	46	51	49	59	73	64	57	64	60
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units not to be demolished	164	233	397	739	340	1079	903	573	1476

out during the vacancy (Accommodation Questionnaire Q26-30: See Appendix 9), but not explicitly about redecoration, etc. The latter information emerged from questions on the reasons for reported delays in making the accommodation available for occupation and may therefore be incomplete.]

Like building work, but more so, these lesser undertakings were concentrated in Local Authority housing built since the First World War of which 12% (compared with the overall figure of 3%) were evidently being kept vacant because of redecoration and so forth (details will be shown in Table 6.6 which accompanies Section e). For the most part it was purpose built flats amongst the newer council housing which were affected: 15% were undergoing minor work (compared with only 3% of privately-owned purpose built flats of the same age). If Local Authorities are prone to carry out redecoration of flats between tenancies, keeping the accommodation vacant whilst work is in progress, then this helps to explain the comparatively high prevalence of such flats amongst vacant properties. (See Chapter 2, Table 2.13). It was, however, other kinds of flats which were particularly over-represented, amongst vacant

housing, and there is no evidence that this was because they were especially likely to be undergoing redecoration or building work between tenancies: on the contrary, less than 1% were to be redecorated.

d) Poor condition

The owners of a further 10% of the vacant properties said their plans for them or the difficulties they had had in disposing of them were due to their poor condition. In these cases no renovation was intended, usually because the owners could not afford it. The proportion involved was greatest (15%) amongst pre-1919 privately owned housing, and lowest (4%) in newer private housing.

The owners' reports of poor condition received some corroboration from evidence of the rateable values and basic amenities in the properties concerned. Table 6.5 shows that in so far as these two characteristics reflect the quality of dwellings, those said to be in poor condition were worse than vacant properties as a whole and more like (although better than) the ones which were to be demolished and all the dwellings classified as unfit by the English House Condition Survey.

Table 6.5 The rateable value and possession of basic amenities by properties vacant because of their poor condition

	Vacant Property Survey			English House Condition Survey
	Properties vacant because of their poor condition	Properties vacant because they were to be demolished	All vacant rateable units with single household space	All unfit dwelling
	%	%	%	%
Rateable value				
£0-£100	53	68	38	64
£101 or more	47	32	62	36
Possession of basic amenities				
Had all three	45	18	59	NA
Amenities being installed	—	—	5	NA
Lacked one or two	20	26	12	NA
Lacked all three	32 } 53	37 } 63	15 } 27	NA
Not known	2	19	9	NA
Lacked one or more of five basic amenities	NA	NA	NA	72
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	176	268	2441	794

NA = Not Applicable.

Table 6.6 Reasons for vacancy:

Reason for vacancy	Local Authority owned			Privately owned			All built			TOTAL
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To be demolished	55	8	35	6	1	4	21	4		15
Affected by building work	24	46	33	39	26	35	34	35		34
Affected by redecoration etc	1	12	5	1	3	2	1	7		3
Poor condition but not to be demolished or renovated	9	5	8	15	3	11	13	4		10
Total due to condition	89	69	81	60	34	52	69	49		63
Others	11	31	19	40	66	48	31	51		37
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	361	252	613	783	343	1126	1144	595		1759*
No answers (excluded from bases)	39	81	120	358	161	519	404*	243*		751*

* Figures include cases for which ownership and/or age is unknown

e) All reasons for vacancy to do with condition

It is useful at this point to bring together the evidence of the preceding sections and consider the total proportions of vacancies which can be attributed to the condition of the properties, in the sense that they were to be demolished, renovated or were difficult to sell, let or occupy because of their state.

Nearly two thirds, that is 63%, of the vacant property was empty for this reason, but the proportion varied greatly with the kind of property involved (Table 6.6). Thus 69% of the housing built before the First World War was vacant on this account, but only 49% of that built more recently. More remarkably, 81% of the vacancies in Local Authority housing were attributable to its condition, compared with 52% of those in privately owned property. As Table 6.6 shows the greatest proportion of vacancies thus explained (89%) were to be found amongst older, Local Authority property, and the least (34%) amongst newer privately owned accommodation.

Older terraced houses and non-purpose built flats as well as newer purpose-built flats have been of particular interest throughout this report because each had a relatively high vacancy rate, whilst the pre-1919 terraced houses in addition formed a high proportion (33%) of all vacant properties. As the material in earlier chapters has implied, many of the vacancies in the older terraced houses were due to their condition: 75% can be explained in this way (Table 6.7), and amongst those owned by Local Authorities in spring 1977, the proportion rises to 94%. This is largely because many of the older council owned terraced houses were to be demolished, as was shown earlier.

Rather smaller proportions of the vacancies in the two kinds of flats can be attributed to their condition; but nearly half were empty for that reason. In the case of the non-purpose built flats, most of which were privately owned, about a third were being renovated, the remainder vacant because of their condition, being for the most part

in a poor state. About 40% of all the newer purpose-built flats were being renovated, and 47% of those owned by Local Authorities, in which two thirds of the vacancies appeared to be due to their condition.

6.4 Reasons for vacancy to do with the condition of the property and the time the property had been vacant

The period for which the properties had been vacant bore some relationship to the reasons for the vacancy which were to do with their condition. Altogether 24% of those currently empty because of anything to do with their condition had been unoccupied for at least two years, compared with 16% of properties vacant for other reasons. However whilst nearly a third of the housing due for demolition or simply in poor condition had been

empty for two years or more, only just over 20% of that affected by building work, and much less (5%) of the accommodation undergoing minor work had been vacant for so long a period (Table 6.8).

The group of vacant properties in poor condition with no prospect of renovation or demolition (10%) illustrates the restricted meaning of the 'reasons for the vacancy'. Whilst the current state of the accommodation no doubt made it difficult to dispose of in spring 1977, the duration of the vacancy itself is likely to have contributed to its condition. Well over half had been empty for at least a year, and even within a year unattended property may deteriorate considerably. However, in the great majority of cases for which the information was available, the properties

Table 6.7 Reasons for vacancy:
Percentages of wholly vacant properties being kept empty by various factors to do with their condition, by age of building and type of rateable unit

Age of building/factors	Type of rateable unit					
	House/bungalow		Terraced	Flat/maisonette		
	Detached	Semi-detached		Purpose built	Non-purpose built	Non-domestic + flat
	%	%	%	%	%	%
(i) Pre-1919						
To be demolished	7	8	31	17	10	13
Affected by building work	31	52	31	48	32	30
Affected by redecoration etc	—	1	2	2	1	—
Poor condition but not to be demolished or renovated	21	9	12	9	15	9
Total due to condition	59	70	75	76	58	52
Others	41	30	25	24	42	48
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	115	101	608	66	194	46
(ii) Post-1918						
To be demolished	2	1	3	9	—	—
Affected by building work	29	40	40	29	(8)	—
Affected by redecoration etc	7	5	4	11	—	—
Poor condition but not to be demolished or renovated	5	4	4	4	—	—
Total due to condition	43	50	50	53	(8)	(4)
Others	57	50	50	47	(8)	(3)
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	116	169	111	173	16	7
(iii) Total						
To be demolished	5	3	27	11	9	11
Affected by building work	30	45	32	34	34	26
Affected by redecoration etc	3	3	2	8	0	—
Poor condition but not to be demolished or renovated	13	6	11	5	14	7
Total due to condition	52	57	72	59	57	44
Others	48	43	28	41	43	56
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	234	274	725	239	215	55

Table 6.8 The duration of vacancies due to the condition of the properties (wholly vacant units)

Duration of vacancy at time it was identified	Reason why property was vacant at time it was identified					Total
	To be demolished	Building work	Redecoration	Poor condition	Others	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 3 months	11	22	48	19	34	28
3 months less than 6 months	13	16	27	16	17	15
6 " " 1 year	19	18	11	15	17	15
1 year " " 2 years	25	20	7	18	14	15
2 years " " 5 years	20 } 31	14 } 21	5 } 5	13 } 31	10 } 16	13 } 21
5 years or more	11 }	7 }	0 }	18 }	6 }	7 }
Not known	1	4	2	2	2	6
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	268	601	176	79	658	2510*

* Total includes 751 for which reasons for vacancy is unknown.

described here as in poor condition at the time they were identified, were also said to be in poor condition at the beginning of the vacancy.

A similar consideration applies to those undergoing building work. Just over 20% of these it will be remembered had been empty for at least two years and this included 7% which had been unoccupied for at least five. Building work usually took less than a year to complete and in the case of vacancies of more than two years involving building work only half the properties had undergone work lasting a year or more. Moreover work had not even begun one year after the start of the vacancies in more than half of these properties. Building work itself therefore did not always account for a major portion of the vacancies and in some cases it may even have been deterioration brought about by vacancy which necessitated some of the building work. Nevertheless, as suggested earlier, once it has been decided to renovate a vacant dwelling, for whatever reason, the work is likely to keep the vacancy in being since it is unusual for prospective occupants to move in whilst work is in progress.

The last point also probably applies to redecoration and minor repairs begun during vacancy. Just over half the properties involved, were council owned and built since the First World War. It is therefore fair to ask, although the survey does not provide a complete answer, whether any of this minor work, particularly if it occurred in areas of housing stress, might have been carried out during

occupation rather than between tenancies. Over half the newer council properties affected, however, were purpose built flats and it is no doubt particularly inconvenient, especially for the elderly and families with children, to be living in such smaller dwellings whilst extensive redecoration is being undertaken.

6.5 Short term 'turn round' vacancies

It was shown in the last chapter that vacancies in the sample which were to last less than 8 weeks altogether occurred in properties which resembled occupied housing more closely than vacant units, but that they involved a disproportionate number of newer council properties.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was decided at the outset of the Vacant Property Survey, that no attempt would be made to interview owners (other than owner-occupiers) of accommodation empty for less than 8 weeks in total, since the main concern was with long term vacancies. As a result, there is little direct evidence about the reasons for vacancy in these cases. Since most of these short term vacancies lasted for more than a week, however, it is worth inferring as far as possible, the reasons why, considered as 'turn round' vacancies, they lasted as long as they did, that is, more than a few hours or days.

The main point to notice in this connection is that short term vacancies occurred in housing which was similar to that subject to longer vacancies due to the need to redecorate or carry out minor repairs. In both cases just over half the properties involved were council owned and built since 1918. Moreover, a relatively large proportion (37%) of the longer term vacancies due to redecoration and so forth had been empty for less than 8 weeks at the time they were identified and therefore had a good chance of being comparatively brief overall, albeit longer than 8 weeks (Table 6.9).

It therefore seems probable that many of the vacancies which were to last for less than 8 weeks were, like some of the longer ones, 'turn round' vacancies prolonged beyond a few hours or days by the need to carry out minor work.

6.6 Other reasons for vacancy

Since over 60% of the vacancies appear to be due to the condition of the properties, nearly 40% cannot be so explained, and for these no clear single explanation dominates the picture. On the contrary, a multiplicity of reasons, only one of which accounted for as many as 5% of the vacancies, emerges. Nor is it easy to discern any underlying pattern which might suggest that some relatively simple administrative action or legislation would remove most of the causes of vacancy not to do with the condition of the property. Moreover, 15% are unexplained.

As Table 6.10 shows, some reasons were rather more prevalent for some groups of vacant housing than for others; in particular the problem of finding a suitable tenant (usually an employee) affected 14% of the more recently built privately owned accommodation, but in general differences were not notable and no other reason involved as much as 10% of any of the kinds of housing so

Table 6.9 Comparison of short term (less than 8 weeks) vacancies and longer vacancies due to redecoration, minor repairs and cleaning

	Vacancies of less than 8 weeks	Vacancies due to redecoration	All vacant rateable units
	%	%	%
Age of building			
Pre-1919	26	25	62
Post-1918	74	71	33
Not known	—	4	5
Owner in 1977			
Local Auth. — pre-1919	1	5	16
post-1918	53	52	13
Private — pre-1919	25	20	46
post-1918	21	20	20
Not known	—	3	5
Type of rateable unit			
Local Auth. — pre-1919			
purpose built flat	—	2	1
non-purpose built flat	—	2	2
houses + others	1	2	13
post-1918			
purpose built flat	26	30	6
non-purpose built flat	—	—	0
houses + others	27	21	7
Private — pre-1919			
purpose built flat	—	—	2
non-purpose built flat	7	—	9
houses + others	18	20	35
post-1918			
purpose built flat	1	4	3
non-purpose built flat	—	—	1
houses + others	20	16	16
Not known	—	3	5
Base = 100%: rateable units	137	56	2510

Table 6.10 Reasons for vacancy:
Percentages of wholly vacant properties being kept empty by different circumstances

Table 6.10 Reasons for vacancy Percentages of wholly vacant properties being kept empty by different circumstances									
Reasons for vacancy	Local Authority owned			Privately owned			All built		TOTAL
	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	Total	Pre-1919	Post-1918	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Condition	89	69	81	60	34	53	70	49	63
Other reasons									
Finding suitable tenant	1	2	2	4	14	7	3	9	5
Mortgage problems	—	—	—	1	2	2	1	1	1
Linked transactions	—	—	—	0	1	0	0	1	0
Price negotiations	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Legal problems	—	—	—	0	1	0	0	0	0
Awaiting vacancy in larger unit	1	—	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Decisions/changing mind	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
Unpopular area	—	2	1	0	2	1	0	2	1
Redevelopment/CPO	3	—	2	3	0	2	3	0	2
Planning permission	—	1	0	0	—	0	0	0	0
Awaiting Council's decision	—	—	—	0	—	0	—	—	0
Finding willing buyer/tenant	—	2	1	1	3	2	0	2	1
Other financial reasons	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	0
Personal reasons	—	—	0	2	4	3	2	2	2
Other reasons	2	4	3	5	10	6	4	7	5
No reason known	2	18	8	17	23	19	12	21	15
Base = 100%; wholly vacant rateable units	361	252	613	783	343	1126	1144	595	1759*
No answers (excluded from bases)	39	81	120	358	161	519	404*	243*	751*

* Figures include cases for which ownership and/or age are unknown.

far considered. There are, however, differences in the proportion of vacancies explained. Only 8% of those in council owned property were unexplained, but 19% of those in privately owned housing. Moreover only 2% of the vacancies in older Local Authority accommodation was unexplained compared with 23% in newer private property.

It should be said here that the categories of reasons shown in Table 6.10, and in earlier Tables, have been constructed so that they are mutually exclusive. If more than one reason was found priority has been given to the first listed on the table: thus, for example, if an owner said he had had difficulty in selling the accommodation because it was in poor condition and also that prospective buyers had been unable to get a mortgage, his answer appears only in the 'poor condition' category. However, even if all those reporting each obstacle to ending the vacancy are included, none of the categories shown in Table 6.10 except 'redevelopment/CPO' and 'planning permission' increases by more than one per cent of the total.

As described earlier, reasons for vacancy other than evidence of actual demolition and renovation were derived from owners' reports of their plans for the property and the delays and difficulties they experienced in implementing them. Even if all the reports were frank and the facts accurately recalled, it is possible that different informants described the same factor in different terms. For example, what one saw as a problem experienced by prospective buyers in raising a mortgage, others may have perceived as a difficulty in finding a

buyer or a matter of agreeing the price. Thus it may be that a smaller number of more fundamental reasons for vacancy underlay the many elicited, the most obvious one being that the owner believed he would lose less or gain more whether in money or peace of mind by not selling, letting or occupying the property at the time. It is, however, equally likely that a wide variety of factors did operate to maintain the vacancies in properties empty for reasons other than their condition. It may be, that is to say, that procedures and transactions involved in a change of occupier which generally go smoothly (such as raising a mortgage) produce problems in a small minority of cases, which are possibly compounded for properties which have already been empty for some time.

6.7 Does missing information bias the results?

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the information about reasons for vacancies is based on the 70% for which an owner was interviewed. From the circumstantial evidence available from informants other than an owner described below, it appears that the deficiency is unlikely to distort the true picture in any major respect.

It has already been said that the missing 30% included short term vacancies (137 out of a total of 751 for which no owner was interviewed) and it was suggested that many of them were due to the need to redecorate and so forth between tenancies. If most of the remaining missing cases also fell into one or two categories of reasons, then the results given in this chapter could well be unrepresentative of all vacant properties. There is obviously no way of being certain whether this is so or

not, and the main difference between the included and missing cases is, not unexpectedly, that the basic characteristics of the latter are less likely to be known (Table 6.11). As a result the number of clear substantive differences and similarities between the two groups is very limited. It is reasonably certain, however, that there were no differences in the type of rateable unit involved nor in the possession of basic amenities. It is also apparent that a greater proportion of the missing than included group had been vacant for less than 3 months (because the former included the short term vacancies) and that they were more likely to be privately owned and previously owner-occupied. On this limited evidence and from what can be inferred about short term vacancies, it seems likely that had the reasons for vacancy been available for the missing cases, the proportion vacant because of redecoration and so forth would have been slightly larger. On the other hand, because of the greater proportion of privately owned accommodation amongst the missing cases, it is probable that the total proportion vacant

because of their condition would have been a little lower than shown, and the proportion for which no reason was evident a little greater. There is, however, no reason to suppose that the overall pattern would have been substantially different from the one described.

6.8 Conclusions

The main factor keeping the sampled properties vacant at the time they were identified was their condition: over 60% were to be demolished, were being renovated or were simply in a poor state. Vacancy is, it seems, for the most part, an interval in which housing awaits destruction, is revived or adapted to the requirements of new occupants. A variety of circumstances appeared to be keeping the remaining properties empty at the time, no single one of which accounted for more than a very small proportion of vacancies. A further possible cause of vacancy — the effect of rent legislation — is examined in the following chapter.

Table 6.11 Differences between properties for which owner at time of vacancy was interviewed and other properties

Length of vacancy at the time of the LFS	Owner interviewed		Owner not interviewed	
	%		%	
Less than 3 months	25		33	
3 months less than 6 months	16		12	
6 months " " 1 year	17		10	
1 year " " 2 years	18		10	
2 years " " 5 years	13		15	
5 years or more	8		6	
Not known	2		15	
Destined outcome				
To be:				
owner-occupied	23		23	
rented from Local Authority	18		12	
privately rented	14		12	
re-occupied — tenure not known	—		6	
demolished	15		11	
left empty	7		1	
sold	18		15	
Not known	2		21	
Owner in 1977 & previous tenure				
Local Authority — previously Local Authority	25	35	13	15
Private — previously private	10		2	
Private — previously privately rented	38	65	35	67
Private — previously owner-occupied	25		32	
Not known	2	—	18	18
Owner in 1977 and age of building				
Local Authority — Pre-1919	20		5	
Local Authority — Post-1918	14		11	
Private — Pre-1919	43		44	
Private — Post-1918	19		20	
Not known	2		18	
Age of building				
Pre-1919	65		54	
Post-1918	34		32	
Not known	1		14	
Type of rateable unit				
House/bungalow				
detached	13		14	
semi	16		15	
terraced	41		39	
Flat/maisonette				
purpose built	14		12	
non-purpose built	12		13	
Non-domestic + flat	3		4	
Others	1		2	
Use of three basic amenities				
Had all three	60		56	
Amenities being installed	7		2	
Lacked one or two	13		10	
Lacked all three	15		14	
Not known	4		9	
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units		1759	751	

Annex: Regional distribution

A very much greater proportion of properties in the northern than other regions were vacant because they were to be demolished, and a lower proportion were affected by building work. It was in the South East generally, but especially in the GLC area, that vacancies were most likely to be due to building work (Table 6.12).

In the case of reasons for vacancy not to do with the condition of the property, differences between regions were mostly small. The proportion vacant because of the difficulty of finding a suitable tenant (usually an employee) were, however, highest in the South East and Midlands etc. group, and lowest in the GLC area (Table 6.13).

Table 6.12 REASONS FOR VACANCY
Percentages of wholly vacant properties being kept empty by various factors to do with their condition, by region

Reason for vacancy	Region				All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	
	%	%	%	%	%
To be demolished	28	12	5	10	15
Affected by building work	25	46	40	34	34
Affected by redecoration, etc.	2	4	3	4	3
Poor condition but not to be demolished or renovated	11	6	12	10	10
Total due to condition	66	69	59	57	63
Others	34	31	41	43	37
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	595 (34%)	321 (18%)	298 (17%)	545 (31%)	1759 (100%)
No answers (excluded from bases)	267	127	150	207	751

Table 6.13 REASONS FOR VACANCY
Percentages of wholly vacant properties being kept empty by different circumstances, by region

Reason for vacancy	Region				All England
	North Yorks/Humb North West	GLC	South East (excluding GLC)	Midlands East Anglia South West	
	%	%	%	%	%
Condition	66	69	59	57	63
Other reasons:					
Finding suitable tenant	3	1	10	8	5
Mortgage problems	2	1	1	1	1
Linked transactions	0	—	—	—	0
Price negotiations	1	1	1	1	1
Legal problems	1	—	—	0	0
Awaiting vacancy in larger unit	0	1	—	—	0
Decisions/changing mind	1	2	3	3	2
Unpopular area	1	0	—	2	1
Redevelopment/CPO	3	2	1	1	2
Planning permission	0	0	1	0	0
Awaiting council's decision	—	0	—	0	0
Finding willing buyer/ tenant	1	1	1	2	1
Other financial reasons	1	1	—	0	0
Personal reasons	3	1	2	2	2
Other reasons	4	6	7	5	5
No reason known	14	13	13	18	15
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	595 (34%)	321 (18%)	298 (17%)	545 (31%)	1759 (100%)
No answers (excluded from bases)	267	127	150	207	751

7 Vacancy, change of tenure and the privately rented sector

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 showed that vacant properties which had been privately rented when they were last occupied were much more prevalent amongst vacant dwellings than could be expected from the proportion of privately rented property to be found amongst occupied housing; and that this was not just the consequence of the connection between vacancy and age and the relatively large proportion of pre-1919 properties in the privately rented sector. A question of long standing interest in this context is whether the security of tenure or limitation of rents, or both, provided by the Rent Acts have led owners of rented accommodation to leave it empty rather than to re-let it when the previous tenant has left. In this chapter we attempt to answer this question and to assess how far the effects of the Rent Acts can explain the high proportion of vacant accommodation that originated from the privately rented sector.

An owner of a dwelling that has been let but who does not wish to relet it does not have to leave it empty; he can dispose of it in other ways. It is therefore useful to begin the assessment by showing what was to happen to formerly privately rented housing and how it compares with the foreseeable destination of other vacant properties.

7.2 Change of tenure

Chapter 4 showed the extent to which ownership of properties changed between the beginnings of the vacancies and the time they were identified by the LFS. Some of the changes, notably from private to public ownership, implied an eventual change of tenure, although as demonstrated in the last chapter, a majority of the dwellings acquired by local authorities were to be demolished. The movement, nevertheless, is sufficient to indicate that the pattern of tenure at the end of the vacancies is unlikely to be identical with that at the beginning.

Since the present enquiry is concerned with the characteristics of vacancies identified in spring 1977, it is sensible to speak of the tenures which were going to be established in the properties, or for which they were destined, although both terms imply a degree of predetermination which was certainly often absent: in fact, just over 60% of the 'destined' tenures had been planned from the beginnings of the vacancies, the remaining 40% having had other plans made for them. When the words 'destined tenure' or a cognate term are used here, therefore, they mean that at the time of the VPS follow-up (three to eight months after LFS) the properties had either been reoccupied under particular

tenures or else that the owners of still vacant housing intended at that time it should eventually be reoccupied under the specified tenures.

One of the difficulties here is that owners of many properties (20%) simply intended to sell them, so that there is no way of knowing what the eventual tenure was going to be, and no information was available on outcome for a further 8%. Because the destined tenure is unknown for 28% of the properties, whilst 14% were to be demolished, and 5% were to be left empty, it is evident that the proportions to be found in every destined tenure group will almost certainly be less than those in the corresponding former tenure groups. This proves to be the case as Table 7.1 shows. (It should be noted that the first three tables in this chapter unlike others and those in Chapter 6 are based on all wholly vacant units rather than only those for which an owner was interviewed. As a result percentages differ slightly from tables in Chapter 6 and others in this chapter. For example, the proportion to be demolished is 14% rather than the 15% shown in Chapter 6.)

Because of the number for which the destined tenure is unknown, it is possible that at least one of the categories was eventually going to include as many of the erstwhile vacant properties as formerly, but clearly, because of the number to be demolished, not all three could do so.

Table 7.1 Change of tenure during vacancy:
Percentages in each tenure group immediately before start of vacancy compared with percentages in each destined tenure group and in each tenure group for occupied housing.

	VPS - wholly vacant rateable units		NDHS - wholly occupied rateable units
	Former tenure	Destined tenure	Current tenure
	%	%	%
Rented from Local Auth.	21	16	31
Privately rented	40	14	13
Owner-occupied	32	23	56
To be sold & other	6	28	-
Lost to demolition & to be left empty	-	19	-
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	2510	2510	68790

The foreseeable diminution of the tenure groups, as shown in Table 7.1, was greatest in the case of the privately rented group: 40% of the vacant properties had originated from the sector, but only 14% were to be returned to it. Thus, whilst the future owner-occupied and council rented groups were each to be about three

Table 7.2 Change of tenure during vacancy:
Losses and acquisitions by each of the three main
tenure groups

	Tenure immediately before start of vacancy		
	Rented from Local Authority	Privately rented	Owner-occupied
	%	%	%
Remained in same tenure group	65	28	49
Acquisitions as % of former tenure group	10	6	24
Total	75	34	73
Maximum net loss	25	66	27
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	538	1009	792

Table 7.3 Change of tenure during vacancy:

Destined tenure	Tenure immediately before start of vacancy				
	Rented from Local Authority	Privately rented	Owner-occupied	Other & unknown	All tenures
	%	%	%	%	%
Rented from Local Auth.	65	2	3	2	16
Privately rented	1	28	6	5	14
Owner-occupied	1	17	49	13	23
To be demolished	24	11	11	10	14
To be left empty	4	9	2	4	5
To be sold	3	22	22	1	17
Other	3	12	6	65	11
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	538	1009	792	171	2510

Boxed figures are the percentages remaining in the former tenure group.

quarters of their former size, privately rented properties were to form only one third their previous number (Table 7.2).

Table 7.3 shows the details of the changes. Little more than a quarter of the vacant dwellings that had been rented from private landlords when last occupied were going to be rented again when next occupied; though it is possible that some of the properties which were to be sold eventually passed to a purchaser who relet them. Of the rest, nearly a quarter (23%) were going to be owner-occupied or just over half if it is assumed that all of the ones to be sold are eventually going to be owner-occupied; 16% were going to be demolished and 12% left empty. Privately owned dwellings which were going to be let but which had been owner-occupied immediately before becoming vacant were far too few to balance the vacant dwellings which had previously been let privately and were not going to be re-let.

7.3 The decline of the privately rented sector and vacancy

The occupied privately rented sector, by contrast with the other two sectors, has been shrinking at least since the First World War.¹ It is therefore unremarkable that the decline should be evident in the case of vacant properties, and to be expected that it will be steeper there than for housing as a whole, since it is precisely when occupants move out of accommodation that tenure is most likely to

change. As we noted earlier, formerly privately rented accommodation is more prevalent amongst vacant than occupied housing, so that there is little doubt that it is particularly liable to be vacant. The question to be answered here, however, is whether this can be attributed to the effects of rent legislation, or whether it has some other cause, of which the most obvious is the condition of the property.

The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive, as is suggested by work other than the present survey. The English House Condition Survey of 1976² showed that occupied privately rented accommodation was on the whole of poorer quality than other occupied housing, and

it may be that the Rent Acts have partly contributed to the difference in two ways. Firstly, at least since the Second World War it has been relatively unprofitable to build new housing for private letting, thus increasing the average age of properties in the sector; secondly as has been discussed elsewhere, the way in which rents have been regulated and controlled may partly explain the amount of poor repair in the sector, although other factors are probably also relevant.²

The relatively large proportion of old and inadequate housing in the sector is reflected in vacant properties, as was shown in Chapter 4, and it has become evident during the course of this report, that old and poor quality housing is especially prone to be vacant, and that vacancy is largely explained by condition.

The question of more immediate relevance, however, and one on which the present survey provides evidence, is whether owners' perception of the direct impact of the Rent Acts helps to explain any of the vacancies so that as a result the vacancy rate was higher than it might otherwise have been. More specifically, what proportion of vacancies are due to the direct effect of rent legislation?

In answering this question it seems most realistic to consider only housing which had formerly been privately rented; properties which were suited to this form of tenure

² *Ibid.* Para 29.

¹ Department of the Environment *Housing Policy*, Technical Volume Part III. HMSO, 1977. Chapter 9, p62, para 8.

² Department of the Environment, *English House Condition Survey 1976 Part I*, Housing Survey Report No 10. HMSO, 1978.

Table 7.4 Reasons for vacancy:
Percentages of wholly vacant property being kept empty by various circumstances, according to previous tenure.

Reason for vacancy	Tenure immediately before start of vacancy			All former tenures
	Privately rented	Owner-occupied	Rented from Local Authority	
	%	%	%	%
Condition				
To be demolished	10	13	27	15
Affected by building work	30	38	38	34
Redecoration etc	2	2	7	3
Poor condition & not to be demolished or renovated	14	7	7	10
Total to do with condition	57	59	79	63
Other Reasons				
Finding suitable tenant	11	1	2	5
Mortgage difficulties	1	2	—	1
Linked transactions	—	1	—	0
Negotiations over price	1	2	0	1
Legal difficulties	0	1	—	0
Waiting for larger unit to be vacant	1	—	0	0
Decision making	3	2	2	2
Unpopular area	0	1	0	1
Redevelopment/CPO	3	1	0	2
Planning permission delays	0	1	0	0
Awaiting council decision	0	—	—	0
Finding willing buyer/tenant	1	2	1	1
Other financial	1	0	—	0
Personal	2	3	—	2
Other	4	9	3	5
Total other reasons	27	26	10	22
None found	16	16	11	15
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units*	737	543	443	1759*
No answers (excluded from bases)	272	249	95	751

* Total includes properties for which previous tenure is unknown.

+ NOTE: The table is based on the properties for which an owner was interviewed.

and of which the owners had presumably made conscious decisions to continue or discontinue letting.

7.4 Reasons for vacancy amongst formerly privately rented properties

Over half (57%) of the properties which had been privately rented immediately before the start of the vacancy were vacant because of their condition (that is, they were to be demolished, renovated, or were in a poor state); an almost identical proportion to that amongst formerly owner-occupied housing (Table 7.4). Vacancy due specifically to the poor state of the property was, however, twice as common amongst that originating from the privately rented sector (14% compared with 7%), and conversely a lower percentage was affected by building work (30% and 37%, respectively).

Amongst other reasons for vacancy, the one which stands out for those formerly let privately is the difficulty of finding a suitable tenant (usually an employee), mentioned by owners of 11% of properties in the group, but by owners of near negligible proportions of the other groups.

Most of the vacancies (84%) amongst formerly privately rented property (as in the other two groups) are therefore explicable in terms of the reasons discussed in Chapter 6 and shown in Table 7.4. Owners of more than a quarter of the properties in the formerly privately rented group,

however, said they had not planned to relet them because of the effects of the Rent Acts; just over half of the owners concerned referred to the problem of security of tenure, and about the same number to uneconomic rents.

Before going on to suggest the extent to which owners' anxieties about rent legislation can be regarded as a reason for vacancy, it is as well to be clear about the nature of the evidence. It comes from answers to two questions: in the first, owners were asked the reasons for their original plans⁺ for the vacant property; and in the second, why — if they had not planned to let it — they had not planned to do so.*

Those who mentioned disadvantages of letting which were said to be or could be interpreted as being due to rent legislation in reply to either question (whether or not they also gave other reasons) were counted as not intending to let because of the Rent Acts. As will be suggested later,

+ 'Original plans' means the plans which the person who owned the property at the time it was found to be vacant (LFS) recalled having had when it first became vacant if he was then the owner, or when he first acquired the property if he acquired it whilst it was vacant.

* See Questions 61 and 62 of the Private Owner Questionnaire, Appendix 9.

Q61 Why did you plan to do that? (ie stated original plan).

Q62 From what you say you didn't plan to let it at that time. Why didn't you plan to let it?

Table 7.5 Formerly privately rented vacant property not to be relet because of rent legislation:
Percentages of the properties having owners who originally did not plan to relet because of perceived disadvantages of rent legislation.

	Destined outcome			All formerly privately rented
	To be left empty	To be sold	Total to be left empty or sold	
	%	%	%	%
(a) As percentage of those in each group				
Did not plan to relet because of Rent Acts	39	45	44	27
Others	61	55	56	73
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units*	84	219	303	737*
No answers (excluded from bases)	2	118	120	272
(b) As percentage of all wholly vacant rateable units				
Did not plan to relet because of Rent Acts	2	6	8	11
Others	98	94	92	89
Base = 100%: all wholly vacant rateable units*	1759	1759	1759	1759
No answers (excluded from bases)	751	751	751	751

* Includes those to be transferred to other tenures and to be demolished.

+ Table is based on properties for which an owner was interviewed.

some of the replies coded as 'due to rent legislation' may have been referring to the more general problem of managing rented property rather than to the effects of rent legislation.

As already stated, owners of over a quarter (27%) of all the formerly privately rented properties gave the disadvantages of rent legislation (in the above sense) as a reason for not letting and this forms 11% of all vacant property or about 62,000 dwellings (Table 7.5). Some of the property involved was, of course, destined for other tenures, and even though the owners' dissatisfaction with rent legislation played a part in the decision to change the tenure, it cannot necessarily be regarded as the reason the property was empty at the time it was identified as vacant. It therefore seems more relevant in deciding how much housing was vacant because of the Rent Acts to concentrate to begin with on that which was going to be left empty, and which formed a comparatively high proportion of the formerly privately rented group (see Table 7.3). About 40% of the ones to be left empty were not going to be relet because of the owner's view of rent legislation. This constitutes 2% of all vacant properties, which is about 11,000 rateable units. (Table 7.5).

Some of the properties which were vacant awaiting sale might also have been made available for reletting had rent legislation been more favourable to landlords. If the ones amongst them which were not to be relet because of the Rent Acts are added to those to be kept empty for the same reason, then 8% of all the vacant properties in the sample could be said to be vacant because of the Rent Acts (Table 7.5). This represents some 41,000 rateable units.

Whether the figure is 2% or 8% however, some of the properties involved were evidently also being kept vacant by other factors. Table 7.6 shows the reasons for vacancy amongst the formerly privately rented group according to the destined outcome. The outstanding features are firstly that half the ones to be left empty and about a fifth of those to be sold were in poor condition compared with only 5% each of the ones to be relet or owner-occupied. Conversely building work affected hardly any of the properties to be left empty and a much lower proportion of the ones to be sold than of those to be relet or owner occupied. The problem of finding a suitable tenant (usually an employee) was implicated in around a fifth of the vacancies amongst both dwellings to be relet and those to be left empty.

Table 7.6 shows the reasons for vacancy for all the formerly privately rented properties to be kept empty and to be sold, but even amongst the ones from these two groups which were not going to be relet because of rent legislation, most vacancies could be attributed to some other reason; notably ones to do with their condition, which accounted for half those involved (Table 7.7). In fact, if only vacancies in housing to be left empty or sold can be attributed to rent legislation, vacancy could be assigned with some certainty to its perceived effects alone in only just over 1% of all the properties in the sample, for which an owner was interviewed. Translated into numbers, this represents something in the region of 8,000 dwellings in the whole of England.

Table 7.8 provides the same information as Table 7.7 but

Table 7.6 Reasons for vacancy:
Percentages of formerly privately rented property being kept empty by various circumstances, according to destined outcome.

Reason for vacancy	Destined outcome			All formerly privately rented
	Privately rented	Left empty	To be sold	
	%	%	%	%
Condition				
To be demolished	—	—	—	10
Affected by building work	39	2	22	30
Redecoration etc	2	—	2	2
Poor condition & not to be demolished or renovated	5	50	21	14
Total to do with condition	46	52	45	57
Other Reasons				
Finding suitable tenant	18	21	6	11
Mortgage difficulties	—	—	3	1
Linked transactions	—	—	—	—
Negotiations over price	—	2	1	1
Legal difficulties	—	—	1	0
Waiting for larger unit to be vacant	—	—	0	1
Decision making	5	—	4	3
Unpopular area	1	—	—	0
Redevelopment/CPO	2	1	9	3
Planning permission delays	0	—	—	0
Awaiting council decision	—	—	0	0
Finding willing buyer/tenant	—	—	5	1
Other financial	0	—	1	1
Personal	2	2	3	2
Other	3	2	5	4
Total other reasons	32	30	38	27
None found	22	18	17	16
Base = 100%; wholly vacant rateable units ⁺	205	84	219	737*
No answers (excluded from bases)	76	2	118	272

* Total included those to be owner-occupied and demolished.

+ Table is based on properties for which an owner was interviewed.

Table 7.7 Formerly privately rented vacant properties to be kept empty or sold because of owner's dissatisfaction with rent legislation and other reasons for vacancy

Reason for vacancy	To be kept empty and not to be relet because of Rent Acts		To be sold and not to be relet because of Rent Act		To be kept empty or sold and not to be relet because of Rent Acts	
	Percentage of 'not to be relet because of Rent Acts'	Percentage of all vacant properties	Percentage of 'not to be relet because of Rent Acts'	Percentage of all vacant properties	Percentage of 'not to be relet because of Rent Acts'	Percentage of all vacant properties
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Building work/redcoration	—	—	30	2	23	2
Poor condition and not to be demolished or renovated	39	1	23	1	27	2
All reasons to do with condition	39	1	54	3	50	4
All other reasons	33	1	31	2	32	2
No reason except Rent Acts	27	1	15	1	18	1
Total due to Rent Acts	100	2	100	6	100	8
Base = 100%; wholly vacant rateable units ⁺	33	1759	99	1759	132	1759

+ Table is based on properties for which an owner was interviewed.

also includes the formerly privately rented properties which were to be relet privately or owner-occupied. In the next section we go on to ask whether they too should be included in an estimate of the number vacant because of rent legislation.

7.5 Is it only the properties to be left empty or sold which are vacant because of the Rent Acts?

So far it has been argued that only the properties to be left empty or sold should be reckoned as vacant because of the Rent Acts. This was on the grounds that although others

were going to *change tenure* for Rent Act reasons, the latter could not be seen as the cause of their being empty at the time they were identified.

Two criticisms could be made of this argument. Firstly it might be said that the distinction between those to be sold and those to change tenure is irrelevant: that the only difference between them is that the destined tenure of the second group, unlike the first, happens to be known; perhaps because those to be sold had been vacant for shorter periods so that owners had had less time to

dispose of them. If this were true there would be a case either for confining the assessment 'vacant because of rent legislation' to those to be left empty, or for including all those to change tenure with the ones to be sold.

In fact, the properties to be sold did differ on the whole from those to change tenure. As Table 7.9 (largely an extract of Table 7.6) shows, a greater proportion of the ones to be sold than of those to change tenure were in poor condition (21% compared with 5%). And in addition

far from being vacant for shorter periods, a greater proportion of the housing to be sold than that to change tenure had been empty for more than two years: 34% compared with 16% (Table 7.10). This suggests either less determination by the owners to dispose of them, or that some characteristic of the properties made them less attractive to potential buyers. There are therefore good grounds for regarding properties to be sold, as a group, like those to be kept empty, as a special problem.

Table 7.8 Formerly privately rented vacant properties originally not to be relet because of owner's dissatisfaction with rent legislation and other reasons for vacancy

Reason for vacancy	To be relet privately and not relet because of Rent Acts		To owner-occupied and not relet because of Rent Acts		To be kept empty or sold and not to be relet because of Rent Acts		Total formerly privately rented and not to be relet because of Rent Acts	
	Percentage of 'not to be relet because of Rent Acts'	Percentage of all vacant properties	Percentage of 'not to be relet because of Rent Acts'	Percentage of all vacant properties	Percentage of 'not to be relet because of Rent Acts'	Percentage of all vacant properties	Percentage of 'not to be relet because of Rent Acts'	Percentage of all vacant properties
To be demolished	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	1
Building work/redecoration	25	0	23	0	23	2	22	2
Poor condition & not to be demolished or renovated	12	0	16	0	27	2	22	3
All reasons to do with condition	38	1	39	1	50	4	50	6
All reasons not to do with condition	33	0	23	0	32	2	29	3
No reason except Rent Acts found	29	0	39	1	18	1	22	2
Total attributable to Rent Acts	100	1	100	2	100	8	100	11
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units ^a	24	1759	31	1759	132	1759	198	1759

+ Table is based on properties for which an owner was interviewed.

Table 7.9 Percentages of formerly privately rented properties vacant because of poor condition and not to be demolished or renovated — according to destined outcome

	Destined outcome			
	Privately rented	To change tenure	To be left empty	To be sold
	%	%	%	%
Vacant because of poor condition	5	5	50	21
Others	95	95	50	79
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	205	152	84	219
No answers (excluded from bases)	76	38	2	118

Table 7.10 Duration of vacancies in formerly privately rented properties — according to destined outcome

Duration of vacancy at the time of LFS	Destined outcome				
	Privately rented	To change tenure	To be demolished	To be left empty	To be sold
	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 3 months	38	24	9	7	19
3 months: less than 6 months	16	11	8	8	14
6 months: less than 1 year	16	27	17	7	17
1 year: less than 2 years	19	17	23	30	10
2 years or more	10	16	39	44	34
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	281	190	115	86	337

Table 7.11 Percentages of formerly privately rented properties which owners did not originally intend to relet because of rent legislation – according to destined outcome

	Destined outcome					
	To be privately rented	To change tenure	To be demolished	To be left empty	To be sold	All outcomes
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Originally did not intend to relet because of Rent Acts	12	20	14	39	45	27
Others	88	80	86	61	55	73
Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units	205	152	77	82	219	737
No answers (excluded from bases)	76	38	38	2	118	272

Secondly, it could be held that rent legislation mentioned as a reason for not reletting played a part in keeping properties destined for other tenures or to be demolished vacant at the time they were identified.

Table 7.11 shows the proportions of each destined outcome group which the owners at the time of LFS said they had not originally intended to relet because of the Rent Acts. It is apparent that this was said about a much greater proportion of the properties to be left empty or sold than of other groups, and in fact two-thirds of the properties for which owners cited the Rent Acts as a reason for not reletting, were going to be left empty or sold.

To find out whether there was any evidence that the properties which were going to be relet privately, demolished or change tenure for which the disadvantages of rent legislation was mentioned had been vacant on that account, the original questionnaires were examined in detail and the verbatim answers compared with those from the questionnaires for the ones to be kept empty or sold for the same reason. All the relevant questionnaires were scrutinised except in the case of properties to be sold for which one third of the 99 (weighted) were used. The results were as follows:

To change tenure (31 cases, weighted)

All those involved were to be owner-occupied. As a group, the owners, at the time they were found to be vacant (LFS), were the most categorical in saying that it was the effects of rent legislation which had decided them not to relet the properties, although in a few cases other factors had also played a part. All except 2 of the properties, for which the information was not available, were for sale at the time of the LFS and it was therefore the process of selling which was keeping them empty at the time, rather than the earlier decision not to relet. About a fifth of them, although being offered for sale were, as Table 7.8 showed, also affected by building work.

To be relet privately (24 cases, weighted)

This group was less homogenous than the first. Over a third (9) were for sale at the time of LFS and in all but 2 cases it was the subsequent owner who has going to let: the remaining 2 owners deciding to relet the properties themselves after failing to sell. A quarter (6) were originally going to be sold, but the owners eventually decided to relet when suitable tenants appeared. Half of

these were being prepared for reletting at the time they were found to be vacant. Altogether over half (14) of the group had already been offered for reoccupation at the time of LFS.

Three of those which had not been made available were undergoing building work intended to convert them for a different type of tenant; 1 was affected by plans for redevelopment, and, another needed extensive repairs. Thus only 5 out of the 10 which had not yet been made available might be said to be empty primarily because of the owners' views of the effects of rent legislation.

To be demolished (11 cases, weighted)

All appeared to be in poor condition and 4 were also on land wanted for industrial redevelopment. For nearly half (5), the owners did not want to relet because of the difficulty of getting tenants out when the time came to demolish the buildings: but it was not rent legislation which was responsible for the decision to demolish. In another 2 cases the owners planned to repair and sell the properties, but they were later acquired by local authorities who said the accommodation was unfit to let and intended to demolish.

Two properties, both rural, could be regarded as intended for demolition, and therefore vacant, largely because of Rent Act restrictions, but even in those cases a number of other factors including poor condition were involved. The remaining two properties were both described as unfit and not worth repairing.

In summary, it is clear that owners views of the effects of rent legislation played an important part in the original intention not to relet the properties once they were vacant, at least in the first two groups above (to be owner-occupied and to be relet). It can therefore be seen as contributing to the existence of the vacancies at the time they were identified, if at all, because of the time needed to dispose of the accommodation in some other way.

Had rent legislation been altered in favour of landlords sometime before LFS, some of the properties in the sample would have been reoccupied in the time it takes for tenants to change which may be less than the period needed for sale. This is probably truest in the case of accommodation belonging to property companies who were primarily concerned with the profitability of

different modes of disposal. For other kinds of owner, however, additional factors were sometimes important: the death of an earlier owner, changes in employment patterns, in attitudes towards employee housing, and so forth. In the case of the properties to be demolished, it is not at all clear that any was in fact habitable at the time it was found to be vacant.

The next question is whether the properties which were going to be sold or left empty differed from the groups already discussed.

To be sold (99 cases, weighted)

It was shown earlier that a greater proportion of all the housing to be sold than that in the first two groups above was in poor condition and had been vacant for at least two years. The detailed scrutiny of the questionnaires for cases where the effects of rent legislation were cited suggests that they were made up of two different categories. The first, which included just over half the total, comprised those which were for sale at the time they were found to be vacant. Most appeared to be similar to the ones which were going to be owner-occupied or sold and re-let.

The second category had not been made available for a wide variety of reasons: the owner's ill health, the need to carry out renovation, the time taken to reach a decision, and the wait for adjoining property to become vacant. The last reason was also sometimes given for leaving properties empty and indicates, as does other evidence on the questionnaires, that whether owners said the property was to be left empty, or sold or demolished was sometimes dependant on the time span they were thinking of: some gave their ultimate and others their immediate intentions. Certainly some of those to be sold but not yet offered for sale appeared to be similar to some which were to be kept empty.

To be left empty (33 cases, weighted)

The first point is that an unusually high proportion of the group, a third, were farms or agricultural cottages. Secondly, several including some of the agricultural properties, were being kept empty in case they were needed by an employee. Also, as was shown earlier, almost 40% were in poor condition. Lastly, the owner of one of the properties (and of one of those to be sold) was evidently keeping the property empty because he considered it unprofitable to let or to sell at that particular time.

What the examination of questionnaires showed more than anything else is how difficult it is in most of these cases to attribute vacancies to single causes. As suggested earlier, it was the owners who intended to sell and who had already offered their properties for sale who were most explicit about the contribution of rent legislation to their decision to sell. But these properties were being kept empty by the process and sometimes difficulty of selling at the time of LFS. For owners of other properties, the situation was often much less clear. Not only did other factors more often contribute to the vacancy, but even the

statements counted as 'effects of rent legislation', were often ambiguous. Some referred to the bother and anxiety of letting, others cited their experience of bad tenants, who had not paid rent or who had left the accommodation in a filthy condition. And some evidently believed that no tenant would be prepared to pay enough rent to cover the cost of maintaining the property — given its quality — regardless of legislation.

It is also relevant that some of the owners who were mainly concerned about security of tenure wanted a major change to existing legislation: the power to gain vacant possession at short notice — (one said, a month); and easier procedures for evicting tenants considered to be bad.

Apart from this evidence and the fact noted earlier that about equal proportions of references to rent legislation concerned rent levels on the one hand and security of tenure on the other, there is nothing to show exactly what alterations to legislation might have decided the owners concerned to relet their properties.

7.6 Estimates of the number of vacancies due to rent legislation

Which of the properties and how many should be regarded as empty because of rent legislation, or more importantly, would not have been empty had it been more favourable to landlords?

Firstly, the owners verbatim answers confirm that many of the properties to be sold or kept empty were vacant for reasons other than concern about the restrictions of rent legislation. That was also true of all the ones to be demolished. On the extreme assumption that all the latter group would have been available and acceptable at least for short lettings, had legislation been different, then the maximum proportion of vacancies which could be attributed to the Rent Acts would remain at 8% representing now some 45,000 dwellings: the minimum again being 1%, or around 8,000 dwellings (those to be left empty or sold for which no other reason for vacancy but the decision not to be relet because of rent legislation could be found).

Should the properties which were to be sold for owner occupation or eventually relet (although not originally going to be let because of the Rent Acts) be added on the grounds that had it not been for the legislation and the owner's consequent decision or indecision, they would have been reoccupied more rapidly? The difficulties here are firstly that some of the properties (a minority) would probably have been sold for other reasons: for example the death of the previous owner or the lack of demand for employee housing. Secondly there can be no evidence from the survey, and there is none elsewhere, that in general sales of property, particularly if it has been privately rented, are more likely to involve vacancy than the replacement of one tenant by another. It seems reasonable, however, to assume that they are, especially in areas where there is a strong demand for privately rented accommodation. If the assumption is correct then

it follows that where rent legislation was the main consideration in the initial decision to sell, it contributed to the existence of vacancies because of the time needed to effect sales, and providing there was no other impediment to reoccupation.

If all the formerly privately let properties not originally to be relet because of rent legislation are counted as vacant for that reason, then 11% of all the vacancies, or some 62,000 would be involved. But if only those for which no other reason emerged are included, then just over 2%, or about 13,500 vacant dwellings might not have been empty had legislation been more favourable to landlords.

The way in which the figures were derived is summarised in Table 7.12, which shows the proportions and estimated numbers of vacancies which may be attributed to the direct impact of rent legislation under different assumptions.

In summary, it seems that anything between 8,000 and 62,000 dwellings may have been vacant because of the owners' views of rent legislation, or more probably since some 31,000 of the larger number were also vacant because of something to do with their condition — between 8,000 and 31,000.

Table 7.12 Summary of the way in which the numbers of vacancies attributed to perceived effect of rent legislation were derived

	Percentage of formerly privately rented properties	Percentage of all vacant properties	Approximate No. of dwellings '000*
Not Attributable to Rent Acts			
No mention of effects of Rent Acts	73	31	169
Possibly Attributable to Rent Acts			
Not to be relet because of effect of Rent Acts and:			
To be demolished	1	1	3
Vacant because of condition	1	1	3
To go to other tenures	4	2	10
Vacant because of condition	2	1	4
Vacant for other reason	1	0	2
No other reason found	2	1	4
Eventually to be relet privately	3	1	8
Vacant because of condition	1	1	3
Vacant for other reason	1	0	3
No other reason found	1	0	2
To be sold or left empty	18	8	41
Vacant because of condition	9	4	21
Vacant for other reason	6	2	13
No other reason found	3	1	8
Total possibly attributable to Rent Acts	27	11	62
Vacant because of condition	13	6	31
Vacant for other reason	8	3	18
No other reason found	6	2	13
Total formerly privately rented	100	42	230
<i>Base = 100%: wholly vacant rateable units</i>	737	1759	550
<i>No answers (excluded from bases)</i>	272	751	

* The estimated number of dwellings is derived by applying the percentages in the second column to the estimated total number of vacant RUs is 550,000. Because the table is based on properties for which a current owner was interviewed, estimates differ slightly from what they would otherwise be. Thus the formerly privately rented group actually constituted 40% of the total sample and not 42% as shown above and the population estimate for 40% is 221,000 rather than 230,000 as shown in the table.

Table 7.13 Reasons for vacancy and change of tenure

Reasons for vacancy	Tenure to be unchanged				Tenure to be changed	To be sold	To be kept empty
	Local Authority	Owner-occupied	Privately rented	Total			
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Building work/redecoration	72	51	41	56	62	24	4
Poor condition	4	4	5	4	5	18	50
Total due to condition	76	55	46	60	67	43	54
Awaiting suitable tenant	3	0	18	6	6	4	15
Other reasons	9	26	14	16	10	36	9
Total not due to condition	12	26	32	23	16	40	24
No reason found	13	19	22	17	17	18	22
<i>Base = 100%: vacant properties for which an owner was interviewed</i>	267	266	205	738	217	397	121

It is important to recognise, however, that owners' accounts of why they had not planned to let vacant properties at a particular time, are not necessarily a sure guide to what would happen if legislation were changed. If it became sufficiently favourable to landlords, then presumably many more owners not intending to let than the proportion citing the current disadvantages of legislation would be prepared to consider letting. On the other hand, some of them, and even some of those saying they would not relet because of the Rent Acts, might decide they did not want to let for other reasons, which then became salient.

7.7 Properties which were going to be left vacant

Although the main focus of the present chapter is the privately rented sector, it is convenient to consider here all the housing which was going to be left empty, in the context of changes of tenure. They made up 5% of all the vacant properties and more than two thirds of them (68%) were formerly privately rented.

Half of the group were reported as in poor condition with no prospect of renovation, a very much greater proportion than of any other group, as Table 7.13 shows. The facts that nearly half the properties concerned had a rateable value of £100 or less and that the same proportion lacked one or more basic amenity suggest that the owners' reports present a realistic picture of the group. 15% were being kept empty until the owner found a suitable tenant, usually an employee, but a similar percentage (18%) of those which were to be relet privately were vacant for the same reason. No other single reason explained vacancies in more than 2% of the properties involved, and 22% were unexplained in these terms. The 22%, however, included 9% (that is, 1% of all vacant properties) which were not to be let or relet because of the owners' views of rent legislation.

Table 7.13 also shows that very little indeed of the property that was going to be left empty was affected by building work or redecoration; that is to be expected, but only a quarter of that to be sold was being or about to be renovated compared with well over half the accommodation for which the destined tenure was known. It is, however, worth noting that amongst those which were going to remain in the same tenure group, it was those in the privately rented sector which were least likely to undergo building work or renovation. This accords with circumstantial evidence that less maintenance work goes on in occupied privately rented property than in other sectors.¹

To sum up: half the small group of properties which may be counted as lost to the housing stock by being left empty, were evidently in a poor state and were not going to be restored in the foreseeable future.

7.8 Summary and conclusions

Nearly 20% of the vacant properties were going to be lost

to the housing stock, for the most part because they were to be demolished, and to a lesser extent as a result of owners' decisions to leave dwellings empty, at least for the time being. Half the 5% which were to be left empty were in poor condition and were not going to be restored in the foreseeable future.

Some properties were to move to different tenure groups from those under which they had last been occupied and for some the prospective tenure group was unknown, usually because they were going to be sold by the current owner. As a result of losses to the housing stock the numbers of vacant properties which were destined to be returned to each tenure group when reoccupied were likely to be fewer than the numbers originating from the same groups. But, as far as could be foreseen, losses to the privately rented sector were going to be the greatest. This reflects the secular decline of the sector which, of course, manifests itself particularly when there is a change of occupier in accommodation.

The age and comparatively poor condition of housing in the privately rented sector associated with its decline helps to account for its comparatively high prevalence amongst vacant properties. If rent legislation and housing policy generally over some sixty years have been implicated in the decline they can also be seen as partly responsible for the relative preponderance of formerly privately rented properties amongst vacant housing. The history is in fact extraordinarily complex and has been described and discussed at length elsewhere;² the present survey can throw no further light on it. The secular decline of the sector, however, is the context for the snap shot of one aspect of it provided by the 1977 Vacant Property Survey which shows that only 2% of vacancies could be attributed to no other cause than the owner's explicit dissatisfaction with the effects of the Rent Acts. Allowing for the possibility that the perceived effects of legislation played a major part in keeping other properties empty which were vacant partly for other reasons, the most realistic estimate of the number of dwellings vacant because of the reported impact of the Rent Acts lies between 8,000 and 31,000 out of a total of 550,000 in the whole of England. These relatively small numbers together with the evidence of Chapter 6 about reasons for vacancy, suggest that the direct effects of rent legislation played only a minor role in promoting vacancy. Aspects of the condition of the properties, often related to their age, were very much more important in explaining why they were empty. Indeed, put in historical perspective, it might be said that the number of vacancies in 1977 was largely a product of the type and quality of housing built over sixty years earlier to meet the requirements of the day, together with the standard of maintenance over the intervening years.

¹ Department of Environment *Housing Policy*, Technical Volume III. HMSO, 1977. Chapter 9, para 29.

² See for example: Department of Environment *Housing Policy*. Technical Volume Part III. HMSO, 1977. Chapter 9, and R H Duclaud-Williams. *The politics of Housing in Britain and France*. Heinemann, London, 1978.

Appendix 1 Definitions used in the Vacant Property Survey

A1.1 Extract from interviewers' instructions

(i) "Rateable Unit" — (RU)

A "rateable unit" is a building, or a part of a building, which is separately assessed for rates. The Valuation Lists give both domestic and non-domestic rateable units. For this survey we are interested in (the parts of) the sampled units that were domestic living accommodation (or being converted into living accommodation) at the time of the LFS first call at the rateable unit.

Thus a sampled rateable unit may be a flat within an address or it may be a house divided into a number of flats or bedsitters or it may be a shop and flat, in which case we are only concerned with the flat.

A rateable unit may contain one or more 'household spaces'.

(ii) "Household Space" — (h'hd space)

A "household space" is the accommodation of one household (including any shared accommodation).

There is *one exception* to this definition, stemming from the survey's concern with units of accommodation rather than with actual households. Thus if a number of households (eg students) share one letting, that is if they share the rent for their accommodation, even though they cater separately, the 'letting' is taken as one 'household space'.

(iii) "Demolished"

A household space is "demolished" if it has less than one complete room still standing, ie if the room has less than a roof (not just ceiling) and four walls.

(iv) "Vacant"

A household space is "vacant" if it is empty and unoccupied. It will usually contain no furniture or personal belongings. Some property may, however, be vacant although it contains furniture; eg an un-let furnished letting or where the furniture is not wanted by its owner or is perhaps being sold with the accommodation.

A household space is occupied, *not vacant*, if it is used (or set up to be used) as a second home, holiday home, or business flat, etc or where someone is away; eg on holiday, working abroad, in hospital (or even deceased).

A household space is "vacant" once the bulk of the (wanted) belongings of the occupier are moved out. It is occupied once the bulk of the belongings which the next occupier intends to move into that accommodation are, in fact, moved in, even if the occupier himself is not (yet)

normally resident at the household space.

Eligible Vacant Property For this survey we are interested in living accommodation only, in properties, even if derelict, which were unoccupied and had nobody resident at the time of the first call by the Labour Force interviewer. The date of the first call at an address on the Labour Force Survey we take as our SURVEY REFERENCE DATE for that RU. Thus each issued RU may have a different Survey Reference Date.

We aim to establish whether the RU (or any household space within it) was, in fact, vacant on the Survey Reference Date and, thereby, eligible for full interview on this survey.

[N.B. Accommodation being used for other than domestic purposes (such as show houses, rooms over shops served as storage space for the business, etc.) were not included as vacant.]

A1.2 Other definitions

Basic Amenities

The three basic amenities are fixed bath or shower with piped water supply, flush toilet with the entrance inside the building and a piped hot water supply.

Shared Amenities

Amenities are shared if they are normally to be shared with people from another household space or from a non-residential part of the building (such as with employees in a shop).

Other Amenities

The other amenities considered here are:— a sink with a piped water supply; a kitchen, that is, a separate room for cooking in (except if it is a bedsitting room, hall, landing or cupboard); central heating, that is, system by which two or more rooms, halls, landings, etc. are heated from the same source or if night storage heaters are installed.

Amenities in multi-household space rateable units

A rateable unit containing more than one household space is said to have an amenity only if every household space has, or has the use of, the amenity.

Rooms

Rooms include those which are or can be used as living rooms or bedrooms, but excludes kitchens (whether or not 6 feet wide); bedsitting rooms, bathrooms, etc. Open plan rooms are treated as one room unless they can be divided by permanent, floor to ceiling, folding or sliding partitions.

Derelict

See back page of Accommodation Questionnaire in Appendix 9. ["in very poor condition, very delapidated, gaps/holes in walls, windows, doors, roof, etc in need of major repairs, not normally habitable".]

Dwelling

Note: Dwellings were not identified in the Vacant Property Survey but "dwelling" is defined as a building or any part of a building which forms a separate and self-contained set of premises designed to be occupied by a single household.

Appendix 2

A2.1 Definitions and instructions relating to the enumeration of vacant properties in five different enquiries

	Census 1961	Census 1971	Labour Force Survey 1975	Labour Force Survey 1977	National Dwelling and Housing Survey 1977/78
Code(s) for vacant properties	'Vacant'	'Vacant' 'Vacant - New'	'Vacant (residential but no-one apparently living there)'	'Vacant (whole address empty)' 'Vacant (Household space empty)'	'Vacant - being converted or modernised' 'Vacant - otherwise vacant/ unoccupied/second/ holiday home'
Definitions and instruction for:- Vacant	... h/hd spaces and dwellings "where no-one is expected to be present or to have their usual residence on Census night"	... h/hd spaces and dwellings "any private living accommodation (including any suites of rooms in partly occupied buildings, rooms over shop, caretakers flat, etc) which - is just built and is ready for occupancy or is clearly empty of furniture or you learn from a neighbour or other informant is not occupied. You must be sure accommodation is not occupied before treating it as vacant. Check with a neighbour whenever you can. Do not accept signs such as an unkempt garden and uncleaned windows, no curtains in a flat, etc, without checking. If in any doubt, treat as 'absent'."	... rateable units... "which are residential but where no-one is living at present eg, vacant houses and flats" (N.B. no instruction to count vacant h/hd spaces in multi-h/hd addresses)	... rateable units & h/hd spaces... "which are residential but in which no-one is living" (inc vacant flats over shops) "Note the reason for coding vacant eg 'For sale notice', 'No furniture', 'Informing by neighbour', "For vacant premises you are not expected to make further calls during the interviewing period to see if people have moved in".	... rateable units and h/hd spaces "You must be sure that accommodation is not occupied before treating as vacant. Do not assume that because the garden is unkempt, the windows are unclean, there are no curtains, etc, that the accommodation is vacant. N.B. You should treat the accommodation as vacant as soon as you establish the fact. Do not recall at a later stage if you have established that it will be inhabited later on".
Vacant newly-built dwellings	Excluded from 'vacants' "... buildings in the course of erection should not be... (enumerated) ... unless it appears they are intended to be used as shops..."	Included with 'vacants' if "... is just built and is ready for occupancy..."	Only included with 'vacants' if entered on valuation lists when sample was drawn.	Only included with 'vacants' if entered on valuation lists when sample was drawn.	Only included with 'vacants' if entered on valuation lists when sample was drawn
Vacant non-permanent structures eg. caravans.	Excluded: not to be enumerated	Excluded: not to be enumerated	Included	Included	Included
Second/holiday homes distinguished from vacants	If no occupants on Census night, code 'vacant' "... where no-one is expected... to have their usual residence on Census night..."	If no occupants on Census night, code 'Absent' "... premises such as week-end cottages and flats... occupied only occasionally... or available for holiday letting."	If no occupants contacted, no explicit instructions were given. Second/holiday homes might have been coded 'Vacant', 'Non-Contact' or 'Ineligible.' If temporary occupants were contacted, accommodation was to be coded 'Ineligible'.	Code 'Ineligible (specify)' "... if an address is ineligible because it is a holiday home or a second residence..."	Code 'Vacant - otherwise vacant/unoccupied/second/holiday home' (no further instruction given)
'Derelict'	Not to be enumerated, "... if dilapidated building which is uninhabitable..."	Not to be enumerated, unless occupied - "... Treat as derelict if the roof is partly or completely missing or if the doors are boarded up or are missing".	Code 'Ineligible (other reason SPECIFY)' if "derelict", (no definition given).	Code 'Ineligible (Specify)'... if "derelict", (no definition given).	Code 'Boarded up/derelict' (no further instruction given).

APPENDIX D

SUMMARY ON VACANT OR OCCUPIER ABSENT HOUSEHOLD SPACES

A 1% sample of household spaces described as "Vacant" or "Occupier Absent" in the enumeration records was drawn in the Census Office, and the sampled household spaces were re-visited to ascertain the actual position on Census day.

Fourteen extra present households were found, 36 present persons, but some of these had posted completed forms to the Census Office and only six households comprising ten persons were omitted from the 1% sample (as indicated in the note on coverage).

There was a considerable amount of re-allocation from "Vacant" to "Occupier Absent" as indicated in the table below. The Census Officers allocated the sampled premises to a more detailed classification than was required from the enumerators.

Enumeration record book (ERB) allocation

	Vacant	Occupier Absent	Total
Total in all ERBs	88,450	36,643	125,093
Sampled for check	858	397	1,255
Check result			
Derelict	89	nil	89
Non-residential property	10	1	11
Being rebuilt or converted	39	nil	39
Vacant/New property	98	nil	98
existing property	513	10	523
Occupier absent			
main residence	38	279	317
second residence	52	85	137
Persons present			
forms posted	1	10	11
no census form	2	4	6
Not allocated	16	8	24

The Census Officers were also asked to enquire as to the county of residence of occupiers of second or holiday houses.

General Register Office, Edinburgh. Published by H.M.S.O., 1975.

Appendix 3

A3.1 Extract from 1977 Labour Force Survey: Instructions to interviewers

Non-Response

1. THE NON-RESPONSE SHEET — Questionnaire D

Complete and return a non-response sheet for every address and for every household space within an address, at which you are unable to complete a full interview for any reason.

(The following notes generally include non-response in hotels but see Chapter 7).

2. SERIAL NUMBER

Transfer the full serial number of the address or household space to the boxes at the top of the sheet. The 'total number of households at the address' box should include all household spaces you initially identify within the address, whether usually occupied or vacant. If you find more than 10 spaces at an address and have to sample, the number required here is the total number at the address and NOT the number selected in your sample.

3. PART (a)

Code 1 — Ineligible (Specify)

Includes premises which you find to be non-residential or have been demolished or are derelict. Also institutions other than hotels, boarding houses, etc and addresses where all the persons are ineligible for interview because they do not come within our household definition, for example, if they are on holiday there and are therefore only temporary residents. If an address is ineligible because it is a holiday home or a second residence code 1 and specify.

A hotel in which no one is resident by our definition is also to be coded as ineligible. This also applies if the hotel is vacant.

Please specify the reason in full, but other parts of the questionnaire need not be completed.

If part of an address is non-residential, but part contains living accommodation do not complete a non-response sheet for the non-residential part. If, however, you do not get a response from the residential part eg shop with vacant flat above, complete a non-response sheet for the vacant flat, coded 3 at part (a) and include a brief description of the position of the residential part in the address at (c) (ii).

Code 2 — Vacant (Whole address empty)

For premises which are residential but in which no one is living:

Complete (b) (i)

enter the date in (c) (i)

and

note the reason for coding as vacant at (c) (ii)

eg 'For sale notice', 'No furniture', 'Informed by neighbour'.

For vacant premises you are not expected to make further calls during the interviewing period to see if people have moved in, but if you are told of likely new occupants please add to your note in (c) (ii) eg 'Neighbour says empty but people moving in at end of May'.

Code 3 — Vacant (Household space empty)

This code is to be used where you find more than one household space at an address, at least one of which is vacant. If the sample address relates to only part of a building and the whole of that part is vacant Code 2 is to be used.

Notes as for Code 2 apply but add to your note at (c) (ii) the location of the vacant space within the address, eg 'top floor', 'first floor-rooms at back'. If you initially identified more than 10 household spaces at an address you will need to sample as described in Chapter 5 para 8. Complete a non-response sheet for each household space sampled which does not yield a full interview. Ring Code 3 for any that are vacant and give the location of the household space within the address.

NOTE: The figure for the total number of households at the address should not be altered if during the course of interviewing you discover any 'extra' households or household spaces.

Code 4 — Person seen and positively refused

Complete the other parts of the questionnaire as far as possible.

Code 5 — Person seen, did not refuse, but no interview achieved or appointment(s) broken

You will sometimes be left guessing why you did not achieve an interview. It may be that, although not willing to take part, the person did not like saying 'No' face-to-face and resolved the problem by never answering the door to you again. Or it may be an emergency admission to hospital, or leaving home unexpectedly.

Complete the other parts of the questionnaire as far as possible and give what reason you can in (c) (ii). Add whether you are not entirely happy with the reason eg, 'I am not sure but'.

Code 6 — Non-contact (no one contacted at sampled address h/h)
Complete the other parts of the questionnaire as far as possible.

You will sometimes know for certain why you do not make contact, eg a neighbour tells you the occupant is in hospital. In cases where you do not know describe the circumstances eg 'flat on 3rd floor — never an answer — neighbours do not know — cannot see if furnished — no milk bottles outside'.

NOTE: You must try throughout the interviewing period to establish contact and non-response sheets for non-contacts must only be made out during the first few weeks of interviewing if your information is very firm about absence during the whole of the interviewing period. For example, if you are told the occupant is in hospital you must check again later unless your informant is absolutely sure that the person will not be returning home.

Be careful to distinguish correctly between non-contact (Code 6) at an address or household space, which is usually occupied during the fieldwork period, and non-response due to a vacant address or household space (Code 2 or 3) which is NOT occupied at the time you first call.

4. PART (b)

i. Type of household accommodation

Ring the code against the statement that best describes the accommodation occupied by the household.

If none of the printed statements accurately describe the situation ring Code 6 and describe the accommodation in the space provided.

ii. Number of households at address

Only complete this section when there is more than one household at the address.

The total number of households in the first box will normally be the total number of household spaces, but where you have to sample because there are more than 10 identified household spaces, enter the number selected in your sample.

You cannot complete this section until you have finished interviewing at the address. If, however, you interview there over a period of time, do not delay sending in A, B and C questionnaires for completed interviews. If 10 or fewer households, make a note of the 'H/H Number' last used at the address so that you can assign the next number to the next household. The last number you use will give the 'total number' for the first box.

Example 1 Two household spaces at an address, one of which is occupied and you achieve an interview and the other is vacant. A non-response sheet for the vacant has to be made out. The 'total number of H/Hs at address' at the top of the page is 2, and in the boxes in b (ii) the 'total

number of eligible H/Hs selected' is 2. The other two boxes are 1 achieved and 1 not achieved.

Example 2 There are 14 household spaces at the address and you select 7 by sampling. You achieve 3 interviews but have to make out 4 non-response sheets because 2 of the selected spaces are vacant, one householder refuses, and the occupant of the fourth is in hospital throughout the fieldwork period.

The 'total no.' at the top of the page and the boxes in b (ii) are the same on all four non-response sheets. 14 is the 'total no.' and the b (ii) boxes are 7 eligible H/Hs selected, 3 achieved and 4 not achieved (the refusal, the two vacant spaces and the no contact). Obviously you cannot complete the b (ii) boxes on any of the sheets until you have finished interviewing at the address because, not until then will you know the full position.

5. PART (c)

We are particularly interested in the dates and times of calls at addresses which are returned as non-response.

Enter at (i) in the relevant boxes, the date and time of each call and the position, or relationship, of the person seen. If you make more than 7 calls continue at the bottom of the page.

(ii) Stated reason for non-response. We want you to tell us in this space the reason for the non-response. If you have made contact with the household quote, as far as you can, the informant's own words for the refusal. If you think the reason(s) stated are not the real reason, we have left a space at the bottom for you to tell us what you judge the reason to be.

Also use this space to give a brief description of the position of each vacant household space within an address.

6. PART (d)

Even though a household may refuse to be interviewed for some reason, the informant may still be willing to give basic household information. Where possible, code the data required by asking the informant the necessary questions. An introduction is suggested when you do make contact to allow you to introduce the basic questions. If the informant refuses to answer these questions, or in cases where you have not been able to contact any member of the household, please code as much information as you can from what you have heard about the household.

Even if an informant refuses, you may be able to learn a great deal about the household from the conversation.

When you know that you have been able to enter all members of the household along the top of the columns, ring Code 1 at the foot of the page. If you are not sure ring Code 2.

Year of birth/age. Enter the year of birth and age, if the information is forthcoming. If you cannot obtain an exact

age, please include an estimate, if necessary age ranges will do eg 40-55, over 70.

We require as much information as possible regarding people selected for the survey, but who, for one reason or another, do not take part, so that we can establish

whether or not we have a representative sample of the population. We may be missing a significant proportion of certain people or age groups. The only way we can check this is by finding out as much as possible about the people and households who would not, or could not, be interviewed.

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 1977

QUESTIONNAIRE D
NON RESPONSE SHEET

SERIAL NUMBER	Region No.	Area No.	Int. Dist. No.	Address No.	H/H No.	Total No. of H/Hs at address

INTERVIEWER'S NAME..... AUTHORITY NUMBER.....

(a) This household is returned as:-

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Ineligible (Specify)..... | 1 | <i>No further details required</i> |
| Vacant (Whole address empty)..... | 2 | |
| Vacant (Household space empty)..... | 3 | |
| Person seen and positively refused..... | 4 | |
| Person seen, did not refuse, but no interview achieved or appointment(s) broken..... | 5 | |
| Non-contact (no one contacted at sampled address/h/h)..... | 6 | |

(b) (i) Type of household accommodation:-

- whole house detached,
semi-detached, terraced..... 1
flat/maisonette(purpose built).. 2
other flat/maisonette/rooms.... 3
caravan..... 4
hotel..... 5
other (Specify)..... 6
.....

(ii) If this household is one of several households at the sampled address please record:-

- Total number of eligible h/hs selected
Number of eligible h/hs where interview achieved
Number of eligible h/hs where NO interview achieved

(c) (i) Calls made on Household

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Date							
Time of call							
Person seen							

(ii) Stated reasons for non-response (Specify whatever the informant stated as reasons for refusal/why you could not contact anyone within this household)

If more than one reason given or if you feel stated reason was not the real reason for non-response enter below what you feel to be the real/main reason for non-response.

Appendix 4 Estimating the number of vacant properties in England in the spring of 1977 — the method, the results and their reliability

A4.1 Introduction

Our purpose here is to examine the reliability of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of 1977 as a source for estimating the number of vacant properties. We are concerned with the ways in which the LFS results were evidently misleading and the ways in which the information it provides might be used to yield better estimates.

To do this three different counts derived from the LFS will be compared, and their relative merits assessed.

The three counts concerned are:

The LFS estimate

the number of accommodation units coded by LFS interviewers as vacant. This is the count from the LFS which has been used in the past to estimate the number of vacant properties in the country;

The HQ-edited LFS estimate

the number of accommodation units which appear to be vacant when other information provided by LFS interviewers as well as their coding of 'vacant' is taken into account. This has not been used before as a basis for estimates, but is available and could be used if it appears to be more reliable than the usual one;

The VPS estimate

the number of accommodation units found to have been vacant at the time of the LFS, by a subsequent survey of certain properties where no interview was achieved on LFS (the Vacant Property Survey). This is obviously a more costly way of obtaining a count than the other two and the extent of the improvement it produces is worth particular attention. In the present case, however, it had the additional benefit of providing information about the kinds of accommodation that were vacant, the durations of vacancies and the reasons why properties were vacant.

To understand how and why the three counts differ and which is likely to be the most accurate it is necessary to describe in some detail the method by which each was achieved. In the following sections each method and the number of vacant properties it produces will be given in turn. The three results will be set side by side and their relative merits summarised and, in the final section, a best estimate of the number of vacant properties is given.

A4.2 The LFS estimate

a) The LFS as a sampling frame

Since 1973, a Labour Force Survey has been carried out biennially by Census Division of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys on behalf of the European Economic Community and the Department of Employment. Its purpose is to provide information about the country's labour force which can be compared with that similarly collected from other EEC countries. It is considered to be a suitable vehicle for sampling vacant properties partly because of its size, being a sample of some 87,000 addresses — almost $\frac{1}{2}\%$ of all housing in England* — but also because the sample is drawn from local authority valuation lists. These are for the most part comprehensive lists of domestic property whether occupied, vacant or derelict†. As a sampling frame for vacant properties they have an advantage therefore over the frame more commonly used on surveys, the Electoral Register which only includes addresses occupied by registered electors. The valuation lists are deficient however in that they exclude those newly-built properties which have yet to be entered on the lists at the time sampling takes place. Hence the LFS sample does under-represent new properties and, particularly important in the present context, vacant new properties.

In addition to this deficiency of the frame, the sample drawn for LFS omits rateable units at military bases, such as army camps, and domestic accommodation attached to non-domestic units such as schools and hospitals if the accommodation is not listed separately or referred to in the valuation lists. Rateable units listed as 'shop and flat' or 'shop and rooms' are, however, included in the sample.

Thus numbers of vacant properties derived from LFS exclude any at military bases and must to an unknown extent be deficient in newly-built dwellings and accommodation attached to certain non-domestic premises.

b) The 1977 LFS — the procedure followed for identifying vacant accommodation

The sample for the 1977 LFS was drawn in September 1976 and interviewers called at the selected addresses

* The Labour Force Survey actually covers the UK as a whole, but for this study of vacant properties, only the sample for England was used.

† The valuation list may under-represent derelict housing in that buildings already derelict in 1973 when the lists were compiled may have been omitted from them.

during a seven week period from the end of April to the beginning of June 1977. At each address an interview was sought with members of the resident household to obtain the information needed for the LFS.

Wherever an interview was not achieved, for any reason, the interviewer completed a Non-Response Record. On this she or he was instructed first to code the reason for non-response into one of six categories, and then to write an explanation of why no interview was achieved.

The six categories of non-response which were to be coded were:—

- 1 Ineligible (specify) ... (eg demolished, derelict, non-residential)
- 2 Non-contact (no-one contacted at sampled address/h'hd space)
- 3 Vacant (whole address empty)
- 4 Vacant (household space empty)
- 5 Person seen and positively refused
- 6 Person seen, did not positively refuse, but no interview achieved or appointment broken.

A copy of the Non-Response Record and relevant interviewer instructions is given in Appendix 3.

Estimates of the numbers of vacant properties when based on LFS figures are derived from the sum of codes 3 and 4 — Vacant (whole address empty) and Vacant (household space empty). Interviewers are asked to use one of these two codes when they are unable to find a household on their first call *and* have reason to believe the accommodation is not occupied.

Before going on to show what the results were for 1977, it is important to explain the difference between the two codes, 3 and 4, since it relates to a discrepancy in the numbers of vacant 'units' identified in different enquiries.

c) *Addresses, Rateable Units and Household Spaces*
'Address' in the present report means the address of a rateable unit. This is usually the same as a postal address, eg, '1 Laburnum Grove etc.' or 'Flat 6, Acacia Mansions....' but sometimes, when a building has been converted and new units separately rated, the address may be 'Flat, 1st Floor, 17 Crescent Road....' The vast majority of rateable units are occupied by one household only, or would normally be the home of just one household, if they happen to be currently empty. A minority, however, are multi-occupied; they house more than one household, because for example, they consist of a number of flatlets, which are not separately rated.

In either case, the accommodation occupied by one household, whether all or part of a Rateable Unit, is in most housing surveys termed a household space or accommodation unit. In the Vacant Property Survey the

term 'household space' is used. Unfortunately for present purposes the term 'household space' was used more restrictively in the LFS: it was only used to refer to one household's accommodation in multi-occupied rateable units. A household's accommodation which included all of a rateable unit was instead called an 'address'.

Thus code 3 'vacant (whole address empty)' means an empty rateable unit which would normally be occupied by one household; and code 4 'vacant (household space empty)' means an empty *part* of a rateable unit, the part being normally the accommodation of just one household.

In the interests of simplicity the two will be amalgamated in what follows and termed 'household spaces'.

In doing this, however, we ignore a difficulty peculiar to vacant accommodation. LFS interviewers were asked to find out the number of household spaces at each address and to return a Non-Response Record for each where no interview was achieved. In practice it is often impossible to determine the number of household spaces within a rateable unit at which no interview is carried out. Accordingly the interviewer will normally return a single Non-Response Record for the whole address, assuming (usually correctly) that it contains only one household space. Alternatively she may have some reason to believe there is more than one household space at the address and make an informed guess about the number.

As a result, for this reason alone the number of vacant household spaces reported by LFS interviewers is unlikely to be wholly accurate. Thus although we can overlook the distinction made in the LFS between vacant household spaces and addresses, calling both 'household spaces', the *practical* difficulty described above will account for some of the discrepancies between the LFS figure of vacant properties and the figure obtained from the more detailed enquiries made in the Vacant Property Survey, shown in Section A4.6. An important point to note is that the 1977 LFS was the first on which interviewers were asked to record vacant household spaces at partly-occupied addresses. This is likely to increase the apparent number of vacant units above what it would have been had they followed the procedure of 1975 when unoccupied units of this kind were ignored. That is to say the earlier figure was spuriously low.

d) *The number of vacant household spaces identified by the 1977 LFS*

As described earlier, a sample of over 87,000 addresses was drawn in England for the 1977 LFS. About 400 of these addresses were not issued to LFS interviewers because it seemed probable that they were demolished or derelict (see (e) below). LFS interviewers therefore visited some 87.0 thousand addresses.

Of these, the interviewers classified some 2.8 thousand as 'ineligible' (on Non-Response Records) — that is, the addresses were, for example non-residential, demolished, derelict or used as second and holiday homes.

Table A4.1 Household spaces identified as vacant by the Labour Force Survey 1977

	Sample issued to LFS interviewers		Sample issued to SSD interviewers		Total sample	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sampled addresses	86,964		392		87,356	
Addresses found to be ineligible	2,793*		379		3,172	
Household spaces found by interviewers	88,195	100	13	100	88,211	100
Vacant household spaces	3,597	4.1	13	100	3,610	4.1

* This figure includes a number of household spaces used as second and holiday homes. The exact number of these is not recorded on LFS but, from the Vacant Property Survey, it is estimated to be 329.

Having then eliminated the ineligible addresses, the interviewers were left with 84.2 thousand and at these addresses they identified 88.2 thousand household spaces. Of these household spaces they classified 3.6 thousand, or 4.1%, as vacant.

The 3.6 thousand — actually 3597 — is the figure normally available from LFS on which the population estimate is based. The details are shown in the first column of Table A4.1

e) *Vacant accommodation at sampled addresses not issued to LFS interviewers*

It was mentioned above that about 400 sampled addresses were not issued to LFS interviewers. These addresses were shown on the valuation lists to have been 'taken out of rating' (TOR) and to be in districts with large numbers of such addresses. Enquiries at the Rates Offices concerned revealed that the places had been demolished or were derelict and uninhabited. For this reason they were not issued to LFS interviewers, whose main task was to interview people.

The group of addresses were, however, important in the present context since, as mentioned in Chapter 1, those which were derelict and uninhabited were of interest for the survey of vacant accommodation. The addresses involved were therefore visited by Social Survey Division (SSD) interviewers at the same time as the rest of the sample was being visited for the LFS.

Of the 392 addresses concerned 13 were found to be still standing and vacant. They are shown in the second column of Table A4.1. If they are added to the 3597 vacant household spaces recorded earlier, then 3610 household spaces were directly identified as vacant from the 1977 LFS sample†. This remains 4.1% of all the eligible household spaces identified.

A4.3 The HQ-edited LFS estimate

a) *A second look at the reasons for Non-Response on the 1977 LFS*

There are basically two ways in which the number of vacant units shown by LFS interviewers might be defective. Firstly, some units may have been mistakenly coded as vacant accommodation when in fact they were

† Vacant addresses of this kind were not included in the 1975 LFS figures because, on that survey, addresses marked 'taken out of rating' were not included in the sample.

either not vacant or not domestic living accommodation. Misclassification of this kind would inflate the number of vacant household spaces beyond the true figure.

Secondly, some units which were actually vacant household spaces may have been wrongly classed as ineligible or allotted to some other incorrect category of non-response. This would depress the number of vacancies below the true figure.

Such mis-classifications are likely to arise not only through interviewer error, but also because LFS documents are not primarily designed to identify vacant domestic accommodation.

At the outset of the present enquiry it was expected that both types of error would occur and that on balance they would cancel one another out.

To find out what had in fact happened it was decided to begin by considering all units for which a Non-Response Record had been returned.

[A third possibility — that interview schedules had been returned for accommodation which was actually vacant at the first call — was likely to be so rare, and so expensive and difficult to check that no attempt was made to do so. The implications of ignoring this potential source of error are discussed in Section A4.6.]

It will be recalled that Non-Response Records were returned by interviewers for every address or part of an address at which no interview was achieved. The Records included not only the interviewers' coded reason for non-response — the basis of the figures in the last section — but also a written explanation of the non-response.

The written explanations in conjunction with the coded reasons were examined by headquarters staff primarily to decide which of the non-responding units should be revisited for the Vacant Property Survey; ie because they appeared to be vacant or possibly vacant domestic accommodation. The results are, however, of interest in their own right because together with the others given in this report they will show whether a more accurate figure of vacancies than is currently obtained from LFS could be derived by using the additional material on the Non-Response Records.

There were a number of reasons to expect before the

exercise began that it would be productive in this respect. Firstly it was known from an analysis of Non-Response Records for the 1975 LFS that interviewers coding of the reason for non-response does not always tally with their written explanation; for example an address coded 'ineligible' might be described as vacant, whilst another coded 'vacant' is said to be demolished. Secondly the instructions given to LFS interviewers mean that derelict addresses are coded 'ineligible'. These were of interest however, when considering vacant accommodation. Thirdly it was decided, as on the Census, to exclude non-permanent dwellings such as caravans, from the present counts. LFS interviewers however are not instructed to code these as 'ineligible' if they find them to be vacant, and they may therefore be included amongst the number of vacancies.

It therefore seemed possible that an examination of the Non-Response Records would produce a more accurate count of the number of vacancies than can be obtained by adding up those coded 'vacant'.

The main reason for examining the Non-Response Records, however, was to select the units for inclusion in the Vacant Property Survey. In addition, therefore, to deciding which of the units coded 'vacant' were almost certainly *not* vacant domestic accommodation and which of those not coded 'vacant' almost certainly were, we wanted to pick out other non-responding units which *might* be vacant, although the LFS interviewer had not coded them as such. These were the units at which the interviewer had been unable to contact anyone and unable to find out anything about the occupants†.

b) *The extent of Non-Response in the 1977 LFS*

At this point, an account of the total non-response on the 1977 LFS will indicate the numerical limits to our search for units which were probably or possibly vacant.

Amongst the 88.2 thousand household spaces identified by LFS interviewers, no interview was achieved at 15.9 thousand (just over 18%): at about 9.5 thousand the interviewer made contact with a member of the household but no interview was achieved because the household refused to be interviewed or broke appointments and the like. This left some 6.5 thousand units amongst which we should expect to find vacancies, and of these, as shown in Section A4.2, 3.6 thousand were actually classified as 'vacant' by LFS interviewers. In addition, as mentioned earlier, some vacant or derelict properties were expected to be amongst the 2.8 thousand addresses coded 'ineligible'. This brings the total number of household spaces which were of interest to the count of vacancies to 9.3 thousand. The details are shown in Table A4.2.

c) *The sample of non-respondents and reweighting the results of the VPS*

Vacant properties are relatively dispersed and therefore

† LFS interviewers are asked to obtain as much information as possible about people at the sampled addresses who are not interviewed. This is done so that the effects of non-response on the LFS results may be assessed.

expensive for interviewers to visit. Since the LFS was expected to yield more than adequate numbers for the Vacant Property Survey, it was decided to reduce the cost of the latter by revisiting only a sample of the non-responding addresses which were actually or possibly vacant. To save not only interviewer costs but also those of headquarters staff, the examination of Non-Response Records described above was also confined to a sample of all such documents. The procedure affects the numerical results in the remainder of the appendix and must therefore be described in some detail.

Table A4.2 Details of non-response to the LFS 1977: Reasons coded by LFS interviewers

Sample of rateable units issued to LFS interviewers	86964
Ineligible rateable units (eg non-residential, demolished)	2793
Total number of household spaces identified	88195
Number of households interviewed	72279
Number of household spaces where no interview achieved	15916
and interviewers' coded reason for non-response was:—	
refusal, broken appointment, etc	
non-contact	2684
vacant	3597
not coded/no Non-Response Record	184
	6465

Analysis of the 1975 LFS Non-Response Records suggested that between 5,000 and 6,000 addresses would be classified by HQ staff as worth revisiting for the Vacant Property Survey, and it was believed that some 3,000 to 3,800 household spaces amongst these would prove to have been vacant.

The most scattered part of the sample lay in non-metropolitan districts, and it was decided to include only half the addresses in these areas. This, it was estimated, would reduce the numbers of vacant household spaces to between 2,000 and 2,800. This was sufficient for the Vacant Property Survey.

Sub-sampling was carried out in the non-metropolitan districts by taking one in two of the clusters of addresses which had been formed when allocating work to LFS interviewers.

As a consequence of the sub-sampling, the results obtained on the Vacant Property Survey for non-metropolitan districts have to be multiplied by two to give the proportions actually in those areas. The figures given hereafter in this report have therefore been weighted in this way. For this reason, they will not agree exactly with the figures based on the total LFS sample as given above in Tables A4.1 and A4.2.

d) *The number of 'probable' vacancies — The reclassification of LFS non-response by HQ staff*

The Non-Response Records examined by HQ staff were, as mentioned earlier, those coded 'ineligible', 'vacant' or 'non-contact'. Scrutiny of the detailed comments resulted in a number of cases being reclassified as shown in Table A4.3.

The number of vacancies as coded by LFS interviewers, after sub-sampling and reweighting, is given as 3613

Table A4.3 The number of 'probable' and 'possible' vacancies in the LFS. Those identified by HQ staff after examination of interviewers' Non-Response Record.

(Weighted figures)						
Reclassified by HQ as:--	At addresses allocated to LFS interviews				Addresses not allocated to LFS interviewer	Total at all sample addresses
	Coded by LFS Interviewers as:--			Not coded/ No record		
	Vacant	Ineligible	Non-contact			
1 Not Vacant Domestic Accommodation						
a) Ineligible						
Non-residential business, institution, hotel etc.	76	409	12	—	—	497
Caravan, houseboat	53	290	17	—	—	360
Demolished	59	1069	3	—	378	1509
Holiday home, holiday letting, second home	44	329	34	—	—	407
b) Non-contact						
Occupants away	87	31	647	—	—	765
Occupants not away, out all calls etc.	29	19	806	—	—	854
Total not vacant	348	2147	1519	—	378	4392
2 Possibly vacant						
Coded — 'ineligible' by interviewer but no reason given	—	7	—	—	—	7
Not coded 'vacant' but described as under-reconstruction	—	18	2	—	—	20
Coded and/or described as 'non-contact' by interviewer but no information recorded about household	10	3	1055	—	—	1068
Total possibly vacant	10	28	1057	—	—	1095
3 Probably vacant						
Coded 'ineligible' but described as derelict	—	241	—	—	—	241
Described as vacant, boarded up/or coded vacant but not described/or coded vacant and described as derelict	3255	168	49	—	14	3486
Total probably vacant	3255	409	49	—	14	3727
4 Not known	—	—	—	155	—	155
Total non-response records examined	3613	2584	2625	155	392	9369

(rather than the figure of 3597 shown earlier). This is shown at the foot of the first column, but of these, 348, nearly 10%, were, according to the interviewers detailed comments, either not vacant or, more commonly, not domestic living accommodation as defined here. When these cases and 10 which were apparently non-contacts are removed, 3255 vacancies remain.

This reduction, however, was more than off-set by accessions from other non-response categories, 409 from those coded 'ineligible' and a further 49 from the 'non-contacts'.

As noted earlier, LFS interviewers were instructed to code derelict addresses as 'ineligible', and to state briefly the reason why an address was ineligible, eg. "derelict". About 240 of the 409 'ineligibles' judged by HQ staff to be probably vacant were described as derelict by interviewers. The remainder were described as boarded up, vacant, empty and so on. All these addresses were included as probably vacant for the present enquiry because, as explained in Chapter 1 of this report, it was suspected that some might more appropriately be classed as 'vacant'.

The 240 'ineligibles' described as derelict undoubtedly exclude some of the properties perceived as derelict by

LFS interviewers: it is known, for example, that some coded 'vacant' were described as derelict. In addition, since LFS interviewers were not instructed about the way they should treat boarded-up dwellings, no count of them is available. For these reasons, no estimate of the numbers of such properties can be derived from the 1977 LFS, nor can other vacant accommodation be clearly distinguished from them, either from the original coding by interviewers or the subsequent HQ exercise.

The net result of removing from the original group of vacancies units which were evidently not vacant domestic accommodation and adding those which probably were although they had not been so coded, was to increase the number of probable vacancies identifiable from the LFS, from 3613 to 3713. If to these are added the 14 found by SSD interviewers at the addresses not allocated to LFS interviewers, the number becomes 3727, (see Section 3 of Table A4.3).

The base number — the total household spaces identified by LFS — is also revised by the procedure described: the 'ineligible' units which were reclassified as vacant are added, and the 'vacants' which were non-residential are deducted. As a result 3727 household spaces out of 88,733 are shown to be vacant, ie 4.2%. This compares with the 4.1% derived from the LFS by the usual method (Section

A4.2d); a very small difference although it must be remembered that this HQ figure includes derelict properties which the LFS count omits*.

The composition of the group of vacancies, however, has changed more than the number: of the units coded 'vacant' by LFS interviewers only 90% were classed as 'Probably Vacant' by HQ; and only 87% of the 'Probably Vacant' had originally been coded 'vacant' by interviewers. The accuracy and value of this HQ regrouping will be discussed in Section A4.5

The second section of Table A4.3 concerns a group of over 1,000 units classified by HQ as 'Possibly Vacant'. The great majority were originally amongst those coded 'Non-contact' by LFS interviewers. They were the cases where the latter had neither spoken to occupants nor been able to find out anything about them, but did not code or describe the accommodation as vacant. From the information given on the Non-Response Record there was no reason to assume that any of the units were in fact vacant and they cannot be used to modify any figure directly derived from LFS. But it is obviously possible that some were unoccupied and that the true number of vacancies was greater than the 3727 classed as 'Probably Vacant' by HQ staff.

In addition, no information was available for 155 units (Section 4 of Table A4.3) and any of these may have been vacant.

In the following pages we shall show how many of the 'probably' and 'possibly' vacant and of the 'not knowns' were confirmed as vacant by the Vacant Property Survey.

A4.4 The VPS estimate

a) *The Vacant Property Survey — the method*

All the non-responding household spaces classified by HQ staff as 'Probably Vacant' 'Possibly Vacant' or 'Not Known', were revisited by Social Survey Division interviewers between September and November 1977 — some 4 months or so after the LFS interviewers' call†.

The first task of the new team of interviewers, and the only one of interest here, was to establish whether or not the unit had been vacant on the date of the LFS interviewers first call. To do this SSD interviewers were asked to contact the occupier if there was one, and if there was not, to speak to a neighbour or someone else living nearby. The guidance given to interviewers about the meaning of 'vacant' is shown in Appendix 1 together with other definitions. With few exceptions, 'Vacant' meant the accommodation was unused and contained no furniture.

If the occupier or local informant said the accommodation had not been vacant on the specified date this was accepted and the unit was counted as not vacant.

If the informant said the unit had been vacant and believed it to have been so far at least 8 weeks altogether, the interviewer then went on to contact the owner (unless the informant was himself the owner-occupier). This was done because a main concern of the Survey was with the reasons for prolonged vacancies and it was supposed that the owner would be the best informant for this purpose. It has a bearing on the present results, however, because if the owner when contacted said the accommodation had not been vacant, his account was accepted in preference to that of the local informant, unless the latter was the occupier concerned.

When the occupier or local informant did not know if the accommodation had been vacant on the given date the interviewer attempted to find the owner, and if successful she again accepted his report of whether or not the place had been vacant. Thus if either kind of informant said the unit had not been vacant, the statement was accepted. This procedure, in theory, introduces some bias which works in favour of finding accommodation *not vacant*.

A device adopted to deal with cases where the LFS interviewer failed to record the date of the visit on which the property was recorded as vacant may operate in a similar way. Where no date was given one was allotted at random within a defined period. If any of the vacancies involved were very brief or began only just before the LFS interviewer's visit, the randomly allotted date may have fallen outside the period of the vacancy. It is unlikely that any such losses were balanced by the inclusion of other vacancies in these properties, which took in the randomly allotted date. However a check showed that the proportion of addresses with allotted dates amongst those found to be 'not vacant' is not significantly higher than that amongst those confirmed to be 'vacant'. So the error involved may be slight.

In addition, collecting the information was difficult. Quite often it had to be obtained from a series of informants. Some (eg neighbours) were not directly concerned with the property in question and did not necessarily know for sure whether it had been vacant nor, if so, when. Many were suspicious of the interviewers' enquiries and there was considerable hostility to the survey: some informants feared that it foreshadowed the compulsory purchase of property or the billeting of tenants on them. Moreover even the most willing and knowledgeable of informants was being asked to recall a situation of some months past.

The loss of vacancies, if any, for any of these reasons is unknown.

b) *The Vacant Property Survey — the results*

As a result of the Vacant Property Survey, 2582 LFS household spaces were confirmed to have been vacant at the time of the LFS. In addition, 97 extra vacant household spaces were found in vacant addresses revisited in the VPS, bringing the total to 2679. This 2.7 thousand compares with the 3.6 and 3.7 thousand found by using LFS records.

* As will be shown in Section A4.6, excluding second homes, a total of 3907, or 4.4%, household spaces were either coded or described as vacant or derelict by LFS interviewers.

† Local Authority owners were interviewed in January and early February 1978.

The interviewers' enquiries also reduced the total number of household spaces amongst the LFS sample addresses to 88.6 thousand (because some of those visited turned out to be non-residential). Thus the 2.7 thousand found to have been vacant (including those that were derelict) formed 3.0% of all domestic living accommodation identified in the LFS sample. As will be shown in Section A4.6, taking into account the non-response in the VPS, this estimate is increased to 3.1%. And this compares with the 4.1% and 4.2% discovered by the other methods.

The confidence which can be placed in the new figure, however, depends in part on how the earlier ones were reduced and the reasons why about a thousand net were discarded. In what follows we show first the number of vacant units found in each of the categories constructed by HQ staff and what was discovered about the remaining units. Then we show the outcome for each of the LFS interviewers' coded non-response groups: how many of those they coded vacant were confirmed, and how many of those they placed in other non-response groups appeared in fact to have been vacant, and so on.

c) *The 'Probably Vacant' units identified by HQ and the outcome in the Vacant Property Survey*

Table A4.4 shows that 68% (2.5 thousand) of the 3.7 thousand units classed by HQ as 'probably vacant' turned out to have been so (Section 2 col.iii): over a thousand were evidently not vacant or not domestic accommodation and no information could be obtained about the remaining two hundred or so. The thousand or so found not to be vacant living accommodation are of particular interest. Nearly a fifth (190) were not domestic accommodation as defined here. Others, although domestic, were not 'vacant' under the detailed definition used in the Vacant Property Survey. A few were not defined as separate household spaces in the VPS*. Many however, were in fact occupied at the time of the LFS and it seems that more exhaustive enquiries made by LFS interviewers might have found them to be so. It is, of course, possible that the information obtained in the Vacant Property Survey is incorrect and that some of these household spaces had actually been vacant at the time of the LFS. This possibility is investigated in Section

* The definition of a "household space" used for the Vacant Property Survey differed slightly from that used on the LFS, being somewhat closer to the concept of a 'dwelling'. For the LFS, if individuals at an address catered separately they were taken to be separate households. For the Vacant Property Survey, however, if such households shared one letting, their accommodation was treated as one unit or household space. As a result a small number of vacant household spaces identified on the LFS were not deemed separate household spaces for present purposes.

The way in which the number of identified household spaces differed between the two surveys is illustrated by comparing the total in the last box of Section 1(e) (76), with the total of column (x) (97) in Table A4.4. Some of the 76 household spaces reported by the LFS interviewers were not considered to be household spaces according to the definition used in the Vacant Property Survey. In other cases, however, the later interviewers identified more household spaces than had earlier been found. The net effect in this case was to add 21 (97-76) household spaces to those classed as 'not vacant'. As mentioned earlier, the same modification made to those confirmed as vacant adds a net 97 vacant household spaces to the VPS total.

A4.6 where the extent of under-enumeration of vacant properties is assessed.

d) *The 'Possibly Vacant' units identified by HQ and the outcome in the Vacant Property Survey*

Amongst the thousand or so units classified by HQ as 'possibly vacant' (usually coded 'non-contact' by LFS interviewers but where no information about the occupants was obtained), just over 5% (55) were found by the VPS to have been vacant. A further 6 vacant units turned up amongst the 155 non-responding LFS addresses which lacked a Non-Response Record.

Again there is a possibility that some of those reported not to have been vacant were in fact unoccupied at the time of the LFS.

e) *Accommodation found vacant by LFS interviewers and the results of the Vacant Property Survey*

Table A4.5 shows what happened to all the non-responding units coded by LFS interviewers as 'vacant', 'ineligible' or 'non-contact' as the combined result of the editing by HQ staff and the Vacant Property Survey.

Of the 3627 units coded 'vacant' by LFS interviewers*, about 10% were classed by HQ staff as ineligible accommodation. A further 26% were eliminated by the Vacant Property Survey because they were ineligible or had apparently been occupied at the time of the LFS. No information could be obtained about 4%. The remaining 60% were confirmed as having been vacant.

Amongst the nearly 3000 coded 'ineligible' by LFS interviewers most were accepted as such by HQ staff, but 11% were found to have been vacant by the Vacant Property Survey, most of these vacant 'ineligibles' having been described as derelict by LFS interviewers. Only 2% of all units coded Non-Contact eventually proved to have been vacant.

A4.5 Which is the best figure?

Table A4.6 sets the results of the three methods of arriving at the number of vacant household spaces in the LFS sample side by side.

It is beyond doubt that some of the units coded 'vacant' by LFS interviewers were in fact occupied and that some were not domestic accommodation. It is also certain that, as expected, some which they coded 'ineligible' were vacant according to the present definition. In addition a very few of the 'Non-Contacts' appear to have been vacant.

The same rearrangements occurred amongst the categories constructed by HQ staff as a result of the Vacant Property Survey, but to a lesser extent. Of the units confirmed as vacant by the latter survey 85% were those originally so coded by LFS interviewers, but 98% had been classed as 'Probably Vacant' by HQ staff.

* This figure includes the 14 found vacant by SSD interviewers amongst addresses not issued to LFS interviewers.

Table A4.4 What the Vacant Property Survey showed about the household spaces classed by HQ as 'Probably' or 'Possibly Vacant'

Outcome of VPS	Classified by HQ as					(Weighted figures)				
	Probably Vacant									
	i	ii	iii	Possibly Vacant		v	vi	vii	viii	ix
				'Ineligible' - Derelict	Total		Non-contact no information about h'hd	Total		
1 Not vacant domestic accommodation										
a) Ineligible										
Not residential, business institution, hotel, etc.	2	115	117	-	-	-	16	16	-	133
Demolished	18	55	73	4	-	-	-	4	-	90
Holiday/second home, holiday letting	-	88	88	-	-	-	22	22	9	119
Total	20	258	278	4	-	-	38	42	13	342
b) Non-contact at time of the LFS										
Occupants probably away	1	103	104	2	-	-	154	156	11	271
Occupants probably not away	19	339	358	-	-	3	655	658	108	1124
Not out all calls, etc.	-	35	35	-	-	-	37	37	3	75
Not known if occupants away	20	477	497	2	-	3	846	851	122	1470
Total										
c) Not known whether indigible or non-contact	2	249	251	-	-	2	87	89	3	343
d) Sub-total where LFS and VPS found same no. of h'hd spaces	42	984	1026	6	-	5	971	982	138	2146
e) LFS h'hd spaces found to be not vacant where VPS found a different no. of h'hd spaces	-	37	37	-	-	3	26	29	10	76
Total not vacant	42	1021	1063	6	-	8	997	1011	148	2222
2 Vacant household spaces	190	2331	2521	-	-	12	43	55	6	2582
3 Not known if vacant	9	134	143	1	-	-	28	29	1	173
Total household spaces in sample revisited	241	3486	3727	7	-	20	1058	1095	155	4977

Table A4.5 What the HQ editing and vacant property survey showed about non-response to the Labour Force Survey

Outcome of HQ reclassification and VPS	Coded by LFS interviewer as						No return made		Total LFS non-response investigated	
	Vacant		Non-contact		Ineligible					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Not vacant domestic accommodation										
Rejected by: HQ	348	10	1519	58	2525	85	—	—	4392	47
VPS	953	26	1020	39	101	3	148	96	2222	24
Vacant domestic accommodation	2192	60	58	2	326	11	6	4	2582	28
Not known if vacant	134	4	28	1	10	0	1	1	173	2
Total LFS non-response investigated	3627	100	2625	100	2962	100	155	100	9369	100

NB Table includes the 392 addresses called on by SSD interviewers; 378 found ineligible and 14 vacant at the time.

Table A4.6 The number of vacant household spaces found in the LFS sample of addresses by the three different methods

Outcome	The source used				Categories constructed by HQ from information on LFS Non-Response Records		Vacant Property Survey and HQ editing	
	LFS Interviewers' coding							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Addresses in sample	87356		87356		87356		87356	
Found ineligible (excluding second/holiday homes)	2638		2366		2588			
Total household spaces identified	88465	100	88733	100	88628	100		
Second/holiday homes, etc	329*	0.4	407	0.5	579*	0.7		
Occupied h/hd spaces	81730	92.4	83349	93.9	85197*	96.1		
Vacant h/hd spaces	3627	4.1	3727	4.2	2679*	3.0		
Not known if vacant (including 'non-contact' at each stage)	2779	3.1	1250	1.4	173	0.2		

* In the case of 372 h/hd spaces it is not known whether they were usual or second homes. These have been distributed between second homes and occupied h/hd spaces in the same proportions as occur amongst known cases, ie 14% (53) were allotted to the 'second homes' category.

+ The HQ edit revealed the number of second/holiday homes amongst those coded ineligible by LFS interviewers; and for the purposes of this table they have excluded from the ineligible category and added to the number of household spaces identified.

It is clear then that there is some error in the original LFS figure, and some — perhaps less — in the revised figure produced by editing the Non-Response Records.

The evidence for error in the Vacant Property Survey figure is more circumstantial. There is almost certainly some and, as explained earlier, the procedure followed is likely to yield more false negatives than false positives; the figure shown of 3.0% (2679) is most likely to be on the low side.

It is certain, however, that the estimate should not be as high as the initial LFS estimate. We shall now look in more detail at the possible extent of under-enumeration of vacancies in the VPS.

A4.6 The revised estimate of the number of vacant properties

As we have seen, the total number of household spaces which were either coded or described by LFS interviewers as vacant or derelict was 4075 or 4.6% of the household spaces in the sample. (This figure includes the 348 coded vacant but rejected by the HQ edit for the VPS as not vacant, with the 3727 coded or described as vacant or derelict, which were revisited in the VPS.) As explained

above, the VPS rejected about a third of these as 'not vacant or derelict' at the time of the LFS. The reasons for this are summarised in Table A4.7

In Table A4.8, the LFS vacant and derelict household spaces rejected by the VPS are shown as a proportion of all the LFS household spaces. To answer the question "Which LFS vacant properties might have been wrongly rejected, as 'not vacant', by the VPS?", we shall look at the 1.6% rejected in more detail.

There is little doubt that the 0.4% shown in Table A4.8, to have been non-domestic premises[§], caravans or, in fact, demolished, and that the 0.2% second homes were correctly rejected, given the definitions used in the VPS. Similarly there is little doubt about the small number (37) which, as described in Section A4.4c were rejected because of the difference in definition and identification of 'household spaces' within addresses in the two surveys.

[§] Unoccupied flats or rooms attached to business premises were or should have been counted as 'vacant' by LFS interviewers. But if they were used for storage they were classed as ineligible by HQ staff (if they had the information) or by the Vacant Property Survey interviewers.

At the same time there may be some doubt about whether the VPS correctly rejected all the 828 household spaces which were found by the VPS to have been occupied, not vacant, at the time of the LFS. Table A4.9 gives further information about this group.

Table A4.7 The VPS outcome for household spaces coded/described as vacant/derelict by LFS interviewers.

VPS outcome	Household spaces coded or described as vacant or derelict by LFS interviewers	%
Not vacant domestic living accommodation at the time of the LFS because:—		
Non-domestic	5	36
Caravan	1	
Demolished	3	
Second home (estimate)	4	
Other occupied domestic accommodation	20	
Other reason	1	
Vacant at the time of the LFS	62	
Probably vacant	2	
Base* = 100%	4075	

* Base includes second homes known or estimated to be amongst those coded 'vacant' (rather than 'ineligible') by LFS interviewers.

The application of the detailed definition of 'vacant accommodation' for the Vacant Property Survey accounts for some of the reduction in the number of these vacants. For example, in the later survey, in properties where the occupant was in hospital for a long period, or had recently died or was perhaps in the process of moving house, the accommodation was not counted as vacant unless the bulk of the person's belongings had been removed. However reports from the later interviewers show that the application of the Vacant Property Survey definition is not always the explanation for the reduction in the number of vacants.

In Table A4.9, it would seem reasonable to assume that the following groups have for the most part been correctly rejected as 'not vacant' by the VPS:—

- 1) 116 rejected at HQ because under the VPS definition, the LFS interviewer miscoded the reason for not contacting a household
- 2) (i) 477 where the VPS interviewer spoke to an occupier who said that they were living there at the time of the LFS. Nearly 50 of this group were classed as 'occupied' under the more precise definition of 'vacant' used on the VPS (they are

Table A4.8 The outcome of the VPS for household spaces coded or described as vacant or derelict in the Labour Force Survey.

VPS Outcome	LFS h'hd spaces — coded/described as vacant/derelict by LFS				VPS H.h'd spaces	
	HQ edit reclassified as 'not vacant'	HQ edit found "probably vacant" — Revisited in the VPS	Total LFS vacant/derelict*		Total VPS vacant/derelict*	
	No.	No.	No.	%	No.	%
1. Not Vacant accommodation because:—						
Non-domestic, used for storage, business, institution, etc.						
Caravan	76	117	193	0.2	—	—
Demolished at time of LFS	53	—	53	0.1	—	—
Second homes (estimate)	59	73	132	0.1	—	—
Other occupied accommodation	44	124	168	0.2	—	—
Reason not known (different configuration of h'hd spaces found in the LFS & VPS)	116	712	828	0.9	—	—
Probably not vacant (estimate from amongst non-response in the VPS)*	—	37	37	0.1	—	—
	—	43	43		—	—
Total h'hd spaces not vacant (excluding second homes)	348	1106	1454	1.6	—	—
2. Vacant						
Confirmed vacant by the VPS	—	2521	2521	2.8	2521	2.8
Probably vacant (Estimate from amongst non-response in the VPS)*	—	100	100	0.1	100	0.1
Extra vacant h'hd spaces found at VPS recall or from amongst other non-response in the LFS	—	—	—		158	0.2
Total h'hd spaces vacant/derelict	—	2621	2621	3.0	2779	3.1
Total LFS vacant/derelict h'hd spaces	348	3727	4075	4.6		

* % of total LFS h'hd spaces, i.e. 88700 (including derelicts and second homes)

+ Based on the information given in LFS records, it is estimated that about 100 of these 143 household spaces amongst the VPS non-response were probably vacant.

amongst the 103 shown as 'away at the time of the LFS'. For the remaining 430, it would seem that the LFS interviewers did not identify these addresses as occupied. In most of these cases occupiers had lived at the address all the year and there was no doubt that the property was occupied at the time of the LFS. It would seem that LFS interviewers were perhaps over-ready to classify these as 'vacant' where a more exhaustive enquiry would have proved them otherwise. In a few cases, however, the occupier had moved into the property about the time of the LFS and it is possible that the exact date of occupation may have been mistaken. To allow for this possibility it is estimated that a maximum 40 of the 430 may have been vacant not occupied at the date of the survey.

(ii) and (iii) 97 (53 + 44) where the previous occupier is shown as 'away at the time of the LFS'. Again these have been rejected under the more precise definition and more thorough enquiries in the VPS. In fact, in nearly half of these 97 cases, the occupant had died but their belongings had not been removed from the household space by the time of the LFS.

Table A4.9 Supplementary analysis of LFS h'hd spaces coded or described as vacant or derelict but found by the VPS to have been occupied.

VPS Outcome	LFS h'hd spaces	
	No.	%
In fact occupied		
1. HQ edit found that h'hd was described by LFS interviewer as:-		
Away at time of LFS	87	116 0.1
Out at all calls	29	
2. Revisited for VPS and:-		
i) Present occupiers lived there at LFS and say they were:-		
Away at time of LFS	103	477 0.5
Probably just one at all calls	339	
Not known if away or not	35	
ii) Present occupiers have moved in since LFS and say previous occupiers were:-		
Away at time of LFS	53	131 0.1
Probably just one at all calls	39	
Not known if away or not	39	
iii) Was found vacant but VPS interviewer was told previous occupiers were:-		
Away at time of LFS	44	118 0.1
Probably out at all calls	46	
Not known if away or out	28	
iv) Had been coded on LFS as "ineligible - derelict" but occupiers were:-		
Away at time of LFS	2	22 0.0
Probably just out at all calls	20	
Total in fact occupied, not vacant	828*	0.9*

* % of total LFS h'hd spaces, ie 88700 (including derelicts and second homes)

+ Excluding an estimate of 36 second homes from 2 (ii) and 2 (iii)

The above three groups account for 690 (83%) of the 828 household spaces which the VPS found occupied, not vacant, at the time of the LFS and there is little doubt that the vast majority of these, let us say 650, were in fact occupied.

With regard to the 138 in the other groups in Table A4.9,

we have no evidence that the application of the stricter VPS definition excluded them from the vacants. Also the information in the VPS was not obtained from the person said to have been occupying the household space at the time of the LFS so the informant's knowledge or memory of the situation is more open to doubt.

There is one further reason why the VPS may have rejected as 'not vacant' some LFS vacants. Comments made by VPS interviewers suggest that in some cases interviewers in the LFS called at a different address from that visited in the VPS. Evidence of this is incomplete but, along with the results of follow-up surveys on a similar sample of rateable unit addresses in the NDHS, it seems that at least 1/2% and at most 2 1/2% of LFS vacants were found 'not vacant' in the VPS because different addresses were visited. This means that for this reason between 20-98 vacant properties were not enumerated in the VPS.

Taking the limits of possible under-enumeration for the above reasons, we can say that between 20 and 276 LFS vacant properties were wrongly rejected by the VPS as 'not vacant'. (The figure of 276 includes all the 178 (40 + 138) found occupied by the VPS where information is open to doubt.) Adding these to the 2779 household spaces confirmed as vacant by the Vacant Property Survey we arrive at an estimate of between 2799 and 3055 vacant household spaces. Thus 3.2%-3.4%, say 3.3%, is the best estimate of household spaces vacant or derelict in England in spring 1977.

Finally, apart from those already mentioned, there is one further reason for supposing even this revised estimate of vacant household spaces to be too low, though, unlike the other reasons, there is no evidence available to help estimate the size of its effect. As in any other survey, the LFS is likely to have missed some vacancies particularly short ones lasting only a day or so. Not identifying a property as vacant on the first call, an LFS interviewer may have contacted the new occupants on a later call and so the property would have been recorded as occupied. There is unfortunately no information available to help measure the extent of under-enumeration of vacancies for this reason but as it concerns mainly very brief vacancies its effect on the survey results will not be marked.

A4.7 The national estimate of vacant properties

Thus the revised estimate of the number of household spaces vacant or derelict in England in the spring of 1977 is between 555,000 and 605,000, say 580,000 household spaces. This estimate has been revised as explained above, to take account of possible under-enumeration of vacancies in the VPS except those brief vacancies possibly missed in the initial Labour Force Survey.

Many housing statistics are given in terms of dwellings rather than household spaces but the conversion of the estimate of vacant household spaces to one of dwellings is not straightforward. From the information available in the LFS, VPS and National Dwelling and Housing Survey (NDHS), it would seem that figures for vacant rateable units are a good approximation to figures for vacant dwellings. Taking into account the possible under-

enumeration of vacant properties in the VPS described above, but excluding any adjustment for short vacancies which might have been missed, it is estimated that between 3.2% and 3.4% say 3.3% (2800) rateable units included in the LFS were vacant or partly vacant. This gives a national estimate of between 530,000 and 570,000, or approximately 550,000 vacant or derelict rateable units.

In Appendix 6 the estimated sampling error of the number of vacant rateable units is given. If we assume

that the range 3.2%-3.4% is the 95% confidence interval for the proportion vacant taking into account enumeration errors, we can combine this estimate with that for sampling errors (assuming both sources of error to be independent) to give a combined 95% confidence interval of approximately $\pm 0.3\%$. Thus the confidence interval becomes 3.0%-3.6%, or approximately 500-600,000 vacant rateable units. These limits therefore denote the probable extremes of error around the sample estimate of 550,000 vacant or derelict rateable units.

Appendix 5 A comparison of the Vacant Property Survey (VPS) and National Dwelling and Housing Survey (NDHS) results regarding vacant housing.

A5.1 The National Dwelling and Housing Survey (NDHS)

The National Dwelling and Housing Survey (NDHS) was a large-scale survey conducted towards the end of 1977 by the Department of the Environment. The survey, like the 1977 Labour Force Survey, included $\frac{1}{2}\%$ of all domestic rateable units in England, though in some housing stress areas the sample was larger than this. It was designed to update basic housing data from the 1971 census benchmarks, including the estimate of the number of vacant dwellings.

A5.2 The number of vacant properties

From the NDHS results, it is estimated that at the end of 1977 there were 729,000 vacant dwellings and second homes in England. It is further estimated (partly from the results of the VPS) that 120,000 of these were second homes, so the NDHS estimate of vacant dwellings is 609,000, equivalent to 3.5% of the dwelling stock. This figure excludes 137,000 properties which were derelict or boarded up and enumerated separately by NDHS interviewers. If we include these, the estimate is about 746,000 vacant dwellings and derelict properties, equivalent to about 4.3% of all dwellings.

The results of the Vacant Property Survey (VPS) are in terms of household spaces and rateable units rather than dwellings. Comparable NDHS figures are shown in Table A5.1. To compare the number of vacant properties identified by these surveys we shall look at the figures for household spaces as these were also the accommodation units recorded in the Labour Force Survey from which the VPS estimate is derived. The NDHS identified 4.6% vacant or derelict household spaces excluding the estimate for second homes. This compares with the 4.4% found in the LFS, excluding second homes. As explained fully in Appendix 4 of this report, the stricter definition and more exhaustive enquiries of the VPS follow-up reduced this LFS estimate to 3.0% and, allowing for the possible under-enumeration of vacant properties in the VPS, the estimate has been revised to 3.3%. Finally taking into account sampling and other errors in the VPS, the proportion vacant in spring 1977 is unlikely to be outside the range of 3.0% — 3.6%.

In many ways, the methods of enumerating vacant properties in the NDHS are similar to those used in the LFS and so are probably subject to the same kinds of inaccuracy and reasons for over-enumeration.

It should be noted, however, that the stricter definition of 'vacant' used in the VPS may not be what is normally required in surveys such as the LFS and NDHS. If one is

seeking information about households in occupied housing and estimating, say, the ratio of households to dwellings, it may be inappropriate to count as 'occupied' a dwelling where no household is, in fact, resident (for example, the household has been or will be absent for 6 months or more). Such cases would be where the owner or tenant is a long-stay resident in a hospital or home, is living with relatives or is even deceased. For the detailed follow-up of vacant accommodation in the VPS, these dwellings were counted as 'occupied'. The owners or tenants would not have considered their homes vacant and, as long as their belongings were still in the properties, the accommodation was not empty and not saleable or usable by anyone else. For the NDHS, on the other hand, such properties should have been classed as 'vacant', having no resident household.

Table A5.1 Comparison of sample and national estimates of vacant household spaces in the VPS, LFS and NDHS

	Household spaces (including derelict and boarded up)					
	VPS		LFS		NDHS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sample estimate						
Vacant or derelict (exc. second homes)	2,930	3.3	3,910	4.4	4,040	4.6
Total (= 100%)	88,530		88,700		88,750	
National estimate*						
Vacant or derelict (exc. second homes)	580,000		770,000		810,000	
Total (= 100%)	17,510,000		17,540,000		17,750,000	

* Grossing factors for the LFS and NDHS are 197.75 and 200 respectively. National estimates are rounded to the nearest 10,000.

After taking account of these differences, the NDHS estimate is still appreciably higher than the figure derived from the VPS. In general, the evidence suggests that the NDHS result is an over-estimate. Nevertheless there are, as described below, several reasons for expecting a slight difference between the two sources. Differences may be due to the following:—

- sampling errors and other random errors in the two surveys;
- the NDHS field period was 6 months later than that of the LFS and results may reflect a real change in the number of vacant properties in the country;
- NDHS may have enumerated some vacant housing on military bases (excluded from the LFS). It is estimated that 0.1% amongst the 4.6% NDHS vacant household spaces were on military bases:

iv) differences in the sampling frames. The sampling frame for the NDHS was the Inland Revenue Valuation Lists, while the LFS was based on the Local Authority Valuation Lists. In theory there should be no difference between the two frames, but in practice there will be inconsistency:

v) differences in the non-response codes given for use by interviewers*. For example:— Because the NDHS gave a separate code for some types of non-response (which were not separately specified on the LFS) it seems likely that some addresses coded 'vacant' on the LFS would not have been so coded in the NDHS. In particular, the NDHS gave a separate code for demolished units. For this reason the 0.1% household spaces coded 'vacant' in the LFS which were in fact demolished would probably have been coded 'demolished' in the NDHS.

NDHS figures for vacant housing exclude any caravans initially coded vacant. Of the LFS vacant household spaces, 0.1% were in fact caravans and so not included in the VPS estimate of vacant housing. Thus 0.2% of the household spaces which were enumerated as vacant by the LFS but rejected by the VPS, have no equivalent amongst those coded 'vacant' in the first place on the NDHS.

It is also possible that NDHS interviewers made some errors in using the code 'vacant' — being converted or modernised. It may sometimes be that an interviewer saw that work was going on in the sampled rateable unit and getting no reply too readily assumed that unit was vacant. (604 NDHS rateable units were coded as 'vacant' — being converted or modernised). In the VPS, about two thirds of this number were reported as having modernisation or major repair work going on in the unit at the time of the LFS. NDHS may include some being decorated only but then VPS will include some where the building work would not be apparent from inspection of the outside of the unit).

A5.3 The number of derelict and boarded up properties

The NDHS enumerated 684 derelict or boarded up properties. The number of properties confirmed vacant by the VPS, which were derelict or boarded up at the time of the LFS is not known, as this information was not always recorded by LFS interviewers. An estimate of the number can be made, however, from the information

recorded by the VPS interviewers at the time they visited the properties four months or so later.†

Two thirds of the vacant properties were still vacant at the time of the VPS visit and, of these, 542 were derelict and/or boarded up. Amongst the remaining third, 83 had been demolished between the visits of the LFS and VPS and 810 had been reoccupied. From the evidence we have about these groups of properties, it is probable that most of the 542 derelict and/or boarded up and of the 83 demolished ones had been derelict or boarded up at the time of the LFS, bringing the total to 625 (542 + 83). It also seems likely that at least some of those reoccupied had been boarded up (if not derelict) at the time of the LFS. It would, therefore, appear that the LFS sample included at least the same number (if not more) derelict or boarded up properties as did the similar-sized NDHS sample, that is, around 680 such properties.

Note: derelict properties

Although it is estimated here that about a quarter of the vacant properties were derelict or boarded up at the time of the LFS, roughly a third of these were boarded up but not derelict. Therefore approximately 16% of the vacant properties were probably derelict at the time of the LFS. (See Chapter 1 for further information about the properties derelict at the time of the VPS visit.)

A5.4 The characteristics of vacant properties

For the reasons described above, comparison of the results of the VPS and NDHS in terms of the characteristics of the vacant properties identified cannot be exact. The most notable difference between the composition of the two sets of results is, as mentioned already, that the NDHS sample includes all second homes. Table A5.2, however, gives a general guide to the overall differences in the two samples, in respect of the following:—

- i) age of building
- ii) type of rateable unit §
- iii) regional distribution

The figures suggest broad agreement in these characteristics between the two samples though no firm conclusions can be made because of the relatively high levels of non-response.

* A copy of the non-response record for the LFS is given in Appendix 3 and, for the NDHS, in Section A5.5 of this Appendix.

† For the definitions and instructions given to VPS interviewers for identifying derelict and boarded up properties, see the last page of the Accommodation Questionnaire given in Appendix 9.

§ Note: this distribution of 'type of rateable unit' is slightly different from that for 'type of accommodation' given in the published figures for household spaces in the NDHS, where all household spaces in multi-household rateable units were allocated to the code 'other flat/rooms' (ie non-purpose built flat).

Ref: Department of Environment *National Dwelling and Housing Survey*. HMSO 1978, Table 21.

Table A5.2 Comparison of vacant rateable units in the VPS and NDHS by
i) age of building, ii) type of rateable unit, and iii) regional distribution

	Vacant rateable units					
	VPS including derelict second homes		NDHS including derelict second homes		NDHS excluding derelict second homes	
	%	(% excluding not known)	%	(% excluding not known)	%	(% excluding not known)
Age of building						
Pre-1919	62	(65)	47	(59)	45	(55)
1919-1939/44	16	(17)	13	(16)	14	(17)
Post-1939/44	17	(18)	20	(25)	22	(27)
Not known	5	—	20	—	19	—
Type of rateable unit						
House/bungalow						
Detached	13		15	(17)	16	(18)
Semi-detached	15		16	(18)	17	(19)
Terraced	41		33	(38)	30	(33)
Flat/maisonette						
Purpose built	13		12	(14)	12	(13)
Non-purpose built	12		8	(9)	9	(10)
Other types	5		5	(6)	5	(6)
Not known	1		12	—	10	—
Region						
North	6		8		8	
Yorks/Humberside	12		10		9	
North West	16		13		12	
East Midlands	7		8		7	
West Midlands	11		9		9	
East Anglia	4				4	
GLC	18		19		18	
South East (excluding GLC)	18		20		22	
South West	8		9		10	
<i>Base = 100%: total vacant rateable units</i>	2555		4492		3805	
% of sampled rateable units vacant	3.0		5.2		4.5	
Total rateable units in sample	84768		85679 (including derelict)		84992 (excluding derelict)	

A5.5 Copy of the Non-Response Record used in the National Dwelling and Housing Survey (front page of questionnaire).

Department of the Environment, 2 Marsham St., London SW1

IN CONFIDENCE
For Statistical purposes only

RSGB 9901

DWELLING AND HOUSING SURVEY

Location within Address

1 (1)

.....	WRITE IN	RATING AREA	.....	(2-5)
.....		SAMPLE ISSUE NUMBER	.....	(6-9)
.....		HOUSEHOLD NUMBER	.....	(10)

OFFICE USE ONLY	C	WARD	RU/B	GV	RV	G	B	T	A	Q	L	M ²
	1											

(11-37)

CALL RECORD	DAY	DATE	TIME	TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS
1st Call	(CODE) → 1 2 3 4 5 6
2nd Call	
3rd Call	
4th Call	
5th Call	
6th Call	
				INTERVIEWER NAME
				INTERVIEWER NUMBER

FINAL OUTCOME (COMPLETE AFTER LAST CALL)

SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW COMPLETED
 NO CONTACT AFTER AT LEAST 4 CALLS
 NON-EFFECTIVE (DEAF/TOO ILL/NO ENGLISH, ETC)
 GIVE DETAILS
 REFUSAL-GIVE DETAILS
 VACANT - BEING CONVERTED OR MODERNISED
 VACANT - OTHERWISE VACANT/UNOCCUPIED/
 SECOND HOME/HOLIDAY HOME
 BOARDED-UP/DERELICT
 DEMOLISHED
 PROPERTY NON-RESIDENTIAL
 PROPERTY IS AN INSTITUTION
 NO TRACE OF ADDRESS
 OTHER - GIVE DETAILS

(39)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0
X
Y

MONTH OF INTERVIEW

(40)

SEPTEMBER 1
 OCTOBER 2
 NOVEMBER 3
 DECEMBER 4
 JANUARY 5
 FEBRUARY 6
 MARCH 7
 APRIL 8

ADDRESS GIVEN IS:

(Code from observation)

WHOLE HOUSE, DETACHED
 WHOLE HOUSE, SEMI-DETACHED
 WHOLE HOUSE, TERRACE/END TERRACE
 PURPOSE-BUILT FLAT OR MAISONETTE IN BLOCK
 WITH LIFT
 WITHOUT LIFT
 FLAT IN CONVERTED HOUSE WITH LIFT
 WITHOUT LIFT
 ROOMS
 MOBILE HOME/CARAVAN
 OTHER - GIVE DETAILS

(41)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0

THE LOWEST FLOOR OF THIS HOUSEHOLD'S ACCOMMODATION IS:

(Code from observation)

BELOW STREET LEVEL
 GROUND
 1st FLOOR
 2nd FLOOR
 3rd FLOOR
 4th-9th FLOOR
 10th FLOOR OR HIGHER

(42)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

REMEMBER TO COMPLETE A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EVERY H/HOLD AT THIS ADDRESS.

Appendix 6 The quality of data; sampling errors and other errors in the Vacant Property Survey (VPS)

A6.1 Introduction

As in any survey, the results obtained in the VPS are subject to a certain amount of error. This error may stem from a number of sources including sampling error, sampling frame bias, non-response bias, interviewer response and recording errors, coding, editing or computing errors. The effect of some errors may be balanced by that of others in which case summed results may be generally representative of the population as a whole. However, this may not be the case and we shall consider here some of the possible sources of error and bias in the VPS.

In Appendix 4, we discussed the possibility of bias in the identification of the sample of vacant properties from the LFS and a revised estimate of the number was made. Also, in Chapter 6, possible non-response bias was discussed in relation to the reasons given for vacancies. Later in this appendix estimates of sampling errors, based on the size and design of the sample of properties, will be given but first we shall briefly consider another source of error and possible bias — that arising from the collection of incorrect information.

A6.2 Response errors

Procedures were adopted on this survey to minimise as far as possible response errors. For example, questionnaires were standardised and interviews structured, all interviewers were given the same training, briefing and survey documents, and all coding and editing was checked. Even so, the survey has a number of characteristics which combine to make certain types of response error more likely than in some other surveys. It was, for instance, often difficult to trace someone who knew about a property and its period of vacancy, particularly if the accommodation was still vacant at the time of the VPS follow-up or if the property had changed hands during the vacancy and the earlier owner was to be contacted as well as the present owner. If owners (or their managing agents) could not be contacted then we had to rely on information from neighbours or others who were able to remember something of the vacancy. Even in cases where the required contact was made, respondents did not always have records of specific vacancies and we were asking them to recall information sometimes going back several years.

For these reasons, some answers obtained are known to have been estimates and so subject to error. To illustrate this we can look at the two thirds of cases where basic factual information about the same property was given by at least two respondents, perhaps a neighbour then an owner. When coding and editing the survey results, it was

found that answers, in such cases, were often discrepant and rules were developed giving priority to answers given by those respondents interviewed, in the following order:—

1. Occupier at the time (e.g. at the start of the vacancy)
2. Lessee " "
3. Owner " "
4. Owner at some other time during the vacancy
5. Other respondent (eg. neighbour)

As might be expected, one type of information which was frequently estimated was that about dates, and discrepancies between respondents' answers were often found here. This was particularly so for the date of the start of the vacancy. We have seen, in Chapter 5, that this date was not known for 6% of vacancies, but for a further 10% or so only the year was given and no respondent gave the day or month.

For about half the vacant properties, the date of the start of the vacancy was given by two different respondents and, amongst these cases, about a quarter disagreed on the year in which the vacancy started. However there is little evidence to suggest that these discrepancies contributed to bias in the results. In most cases the second informant gave the year adjacent to that given by the 'priority' informant and the numbers saying that the vacancy started in an earlier or in a later year than that given by the priority informant were about equal.

As with this example, no evidence has been found in the survey results to suggest that there is any significant, systematic bias caused by errors in the information collected.

A6.3 Sampling error of the percentage vacant

The sampling error* of the percentage of properties in the LFS confirmed to be vacant or partly vacant by the VPS has been calculated taking into account the complex multi-stage, stratified sample design† of the VPS. The formula used is:

$$\text{estimated sampling error of } \frac{x}{n} = \frac{1}{n} \sqrt{\text{variance}(x)}$$

where x = no of vacant or partly vacant rateable units identified (weighted to take account of sub-sampling in Non-Metropolitan Areas)

* The term 'sampling error' has been used but the method of estimation is such that it includes all those sources of random error the effects of which are independent from primary sampling unit to primary sampling unit.

† The sample design is described fully in Appendix 7.

and n = no of domestic rateable units in the LFS set sample
so the percentage found vacant/partly vacant

$$= \frac{x}{n} = \frac{2555}{84768} \times 100 = 3.01\%$$

$$\text{s.e. } \left(\frac{x}{n} \right) = \frac{1}{84768} \sqrt{11260.7045 \times 100} = 0.00125 \times 100 \\ = 0.125\%$$

The 95% confidence interval for the population value is:

$$3.01\% \pm 1.96 (0.125)\% = 3.01 \pm 0.25\% \\ = 2.76\% \text{ to } 3.26\% \text{ vacant/partly vacant rateable units} \\ = 2340 \text{ to } 2760$$

The formula for variance (x) is given in Section A6.5.

In Appendix 4, a revised estimate of between 3.2% and 3.4% rateable units vacant was given, taking into account possible under-enumeration of vacant units in the VPS follow-up. The sampling error calculated above can be combined with this enumeration error giving a 95% confidence interval of about 3.0%-3.6%. This means that, if we were to have carried out the survey many times on the same dates using the same sample design, size and identification procedures, in 95% of such surveys the actual percentage of vacant rateable units in England in the spring of 1977 would lie within this interval. That is, the number would be between 2540 and 3050, say 2800, in the LFS sample and the national estimate between

500,000 and 600,000, say 550,000 vacant or partly vacant rateable units. (See Appendix 7 for the grossing factor.)

A6.4 Sampling errors associated with characteristics of vacant properties

Sampling errors for multi-stage samples are almost always larger than those for simple random samples and, although proportionate stratification may reduce this increase in error, it will not generally eliminate it. It would therefore be misleading to present sampling errors assuming simple random sampling in the VPS. For some of the main survey variables sampling errors have been calculated as was the sampling error for the number of vacant properties, taking into account the complex, multi-stage, stratified sample design employed. These are shown, with associated 95% confidence limits in Tables A6.1-3 and the formulae used for their calculation are given in Section A6.5.

With a complex sample design, the sampling error of a percentage depends not only on the magnitude of the percentage and the size of the sample base, but also on the particular variable under consideration. However, rather than calculate sampling errors for every percentage in the report, the design effects associated with the sampling errors of certain types of variables have been estimated. These are shown in Tables A6.1-3, and can be used to estimate the sampling errors of estimates of similar variables, as described below.

Table A6.1 Sampling error — 95% confidence limits and design effects for characteristics of vacant properties

	% of vacant rateable units (including partly vacant units)	95% confidence interval + %	Square root of design effect $\sqrt{d_{eff}}$
Age of building			
Pre-1900	46	4	1.6
1900-1918	16	2	1.5
1919-1944	16	2	1.2
1945 or later	17	3	1.4
Not known	5	1	1.1
Type of rateable unit			
House or bungalow			
detached	13	3	2.0
semi-detached	15	3	1.5
terraced	41	5	2.3
Flat or maisonette			
purpose built	13	2	1.0
non-purpose built	12	3	2.0
Other types	4	1	1.4
Age of building and owner in 1977			
Pre-1919 — Local Authority	16	2	1.5
“ — Private	46	3	1.3
Post-1918 — Local Authority	13	2	1.3
“ — Private	20	2	1.3
Not known	5	1	1.0
Region			
North	6	2	1.8
Yorks/Humberside	12	2	1.1
North West	16	4	2.2
East Midlands	7	2	1.3
West Midlands	11	3	2.0
East Anglia	4	0	0.4
GLC area	18	3	1.5
South East (excluding GLC)	18	4	2.2
South West	8	1	1.0
Area type			
Metropolitan (excluding GLC)	25	2	1.2
GLC area	18	3	1.5
Non-metropolitan	57	4	1.6
Base = 100%: Weighted	2555		
(Unweighted)	(1823)		

Table A6.2 Sampling error - 95% confidence limits and design effects for characteristics of vacant properties

	% of vacant rateable units	95% confidence interval + %	Square root of design effect $\sqrt{\text{deff}}$
Rateable units containing			
Single h/h'd space	97	1	1.5
More than one h/h'd space	3	1	1.4
Previous tenure			
Rented from Local Authority	21	3	1.6
Privately rented	40	4	1.8
Owner-occupied	32	4	2.0
Use of three basic amenities			
Has all three	59	3	1.2
Amenities being installed	5	1	1.2
Lacked one or two	12	2	1.3
Lacked all three	14	2	1.5
Use of WC with entrance inside building			
Sole use	63	3	1.2
Shared use	2	1	1.2
WC being installed	4	1	1.3
Outside WC only	20	2	1.3
No flush WC	4	1	1.3
Length of vacancy at the time of the LFS			
Less than 1 week	4	1	0.9
1 wk less than 4 weeks	10	1	0.9
4 wks " 8 weeks	8	1	1.0
8 wks " 3 mths	6	1	1.1
3 mths " 6 mths	15	2	1.2
6 mths " 1 year	15	2	1.1
1 yr " 2 years	15	1	0.8
2 yrs " 5 years	13	2	1.0
5 yrs " 10 years	5	1	1.1
10 years or more	2	1	1.1
Not known	6	1	1.2
Base = 100% Weighted (Unweighted)	2510 (1790)		

A design effect (deff) is the ratio of the variance for the complex design to that which would have applied had a simple random sample been employed. The square root of the 'deff' is the appropriate multiplier to be applied to the simple random sample error to give the sampling error for the complex design. From the $\sqrt{\text{deff}}$'s presented in Tables A6.1-3 it is possible to infer the approximate size of the $\sqrt{\text{deff}}$ for similar types of variable and by multiplying this by the standard error for a simple random sample of the same size, a sampling error for the complex design employed can be estimated.

Design effects, besides enabling estimates of other sampling errors to be made in this way, give a useful indication of the extent to which certain types of vacant property are clustered. There are, of course, other ways of investigating clustering but if a particular characteristic of the properties has a relatively high $\sqrt{\text{deff}}$, this implies that the characteristic tended to be found to a greater extent in some sample areas than in others. A $\sqrt{\text{deff}}$ close to unity, on the other hand, suggests that the characteristic occurred fairly evenly throughout the sample areas.

In Tables A6.1 and 2, sampling errors are shown for estimates based on the whole sample. For the estimate of 16% of vacant properties being pre-1919 council-owned accommodation, for example, the 95% confidence limits are 14-18%.

Table A6.3 shows the extent to which sampling errors increase for results relating to the smaller sub-groups of

vacant properties and sample estimates should be treated with more caution than those based on the whole sample.

The sampling errors associated with the regional distribution of vacant housing are given in Table A6.1. In the case of East Anglia the $\sqrt{\text{deff}}$ of less than unity may be due to the small number of primary sampling units in the region and the fact that $\sqrt{\text{deff}}$'s are themselves subject to sampling error.

From Tables A6.1 and 2, it can be seen that the design effects for the length of vacancies distribution tend to be lower than many of the other design effects shown. This would suggest that the distribution of the lengths of vacancies is more even throughout the sample areas than that of other variables which describe the properties rather than the vacancies. This would seem reasonable as one might expect certain types and tenures of property to be more clustered than features of the vacancies themselves, such as their length.

A6.5 The calculation of sampling errors, 95% confidence limits and design effects

a. Sampling errors

Sampling errors for the VPS estimates have been calculated taking into account the multi-stage, stratified sample design, using the following combined ratio estimate formula:

If L = the number of strata (14 Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan areas within 8 Standard Regions),

n_h = the number of PSU's selected in the h^{th} stratum,

m_{hi} = the number of elements in the i^{th} PSU in the h^{th} stratum,

and x_{hij} and y_{hij} = the values (either 0 or 1) of the two variables of interest, (e.g. $x_{hij} = 1$ for each vacant unit, j , in the i^{th} PSU of the h^{th} stratum and $y_{hij} = 1$ if that unit was, say, built before 1919),

the proportion of interest is estimated by:

$$\hat{R}_c = \frac{\sum_{h=1}^L \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{m_{hi}} y_{hij}}{\sum_{h=1}^L \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{m_{hi}} x_{hij}}$$

The variance of this ratio is estimated by:

$$\text{Var}(\hat{R}_c) = \frac{\sum_{h=1}^L \frac{n_h}{2(n_h-1)} \sum_{i=1}^{n_h-1} (D_{hi} - D_{hi+1})^2}{\left(\sum_{h=1}^L \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \sum_{j=1}^{m_{hi}} x_{hij} \right)^2}$$

$$\text{where } D_{hi} = \sum_{j=1}^{m_{hi}} y_{hij} - \hat{R}_c \sum_{j=1}^{m_{hi}} x_{hij}$$

Note: The coefficient of variation of x ,

$$CV(x) = \frac{\sqrt{\text{Var}(x)}}{2} \text{ was also calculated,}$$

$$\text{where } \text{Var}(x) = \sum_{h=1}^L \frac{n_h}{2(n_h-1)} \sum_{i=1}^{n_h-1} (x_{hi} - x_{hi+1})^2$$

$$\text{and } x_{hi} = \sum_{j=1}^{m_{hi}} x_{hij}$$

The suitability of the above sampling error formula depends on the coefficient of variation of x being less than 0.1, a condition which is fulfilled for all the characteristics for which sampling errors are presented here.

b. Confidence intervals

The 95% confidence limits are given by the formula:

$$\hat{R}_c \pm 1.96 \sqrt{\text{Var}(\hat{R}_c)}$$

Table A6.3 Sampling error—95% confidence limits and design effects for characteristics of vacant properties

	% of vacant rateable units (including partly vacant units)	95% confidence interval + %	Square root of design effect $\sqrt{\text{deff}}$
Pre-1919 Local Authority owned			
Terraced house	71	7	1.4
Flat or maisonette			
purpose built	7	3	1.1
non-purpose built	13	5	1.3
Base = 100%: Weighted	404		
(Unweighted)	(318)		
Pre-1919 Privately owned			
House or bungalow			
detached	13	4	1.7
semi-detached	10	3	1.6
terraced	48	7	2.1
Flat or maisonette			
purpose built	4	2	1.2
Base = 100%: Weighted	1174		
(Unweighted)	(809)		
Post-1919 Local Authority owned			
House or bungalow			
detached	5	4	1.2
semi-detached	22	6	1.1
terraced	23	7	1.3
Flat or maisonette			
purpose built	46	7	1.1
Base = 100%: Weighted	342		
(Unweighted)	(252)		
Post-1918 Privately owned			
House or bungalow			
detached	29	6	1.1
semi-detached	33	5	1.0
terraced	15	5	1.2
Flat or maisonette			
purpose built	17	4	0.9
Base = 100%: Weighted	506		
(Unweighted)	(340)		

c. *Design effects*

The square root of the design effect for a proportion 'p' is given by the formula:

$$\sqrt{deff} = \frac{\text{estimated sampling error of } p \text{ with complex design}}{\text{estimated sampling error of } p \text{ with a simple random sample of the same size}}$$

d. *Estimating sampling errors of other survey variables*

The 95% confidence limits around a survey estimate for which the complex sampling error has not been presented here can be estimated using the \sqrt{deff} for a similar type of variable, as follows:

The 95% confidence limit is estimated by the formula:

$$p^1 \pm 1.96 \sqrt{deff} \sqrt{\frac{p^1 (1-p^1)}{n}}$$

where p^1 is the proportion of interest, n is the sample size, being the sampling error assuming a simple random sample.

$$\sqrt{\frac{p^1 (1-p^1)}{n}}$$

Appendix 7 The sample design

The sample for the 1977 Labour Force Survey was a two-stage, stratified design yielding a sample, in England, of about 88,000 household spaces. The sample was stratified by Standard Region and by Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan County within Region, with Local Authority Districts listed within strata ordered by population density and an economic indicator. (The latter was formed by taking the proportion of domestic rateable value accounted for by property valued at over £400). Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) were Local Authority Districts in Metropolitan Counties and groups of 3 or 4 Districts within Non-Metropolitan Counties, selected systematically with probability proportional to the estimated number of residential hereditaments (ie domestic rateable units). Of PSU selections, 57 were made in Metropolitan Counties including 22 London Boroughs and 28 in Non-Metropolitan Counties. In all, 138 different Local Authorities were represented, over a third of those in the country.

Within each selected PSU, a systematic sample of hereditaments, including any noted as 'taken out of rating' or 'derelict', was selected from the Local Authority Valuation Lists. Non-residential properties were

identified as far as possible from their codes and descriptions given on the Valuation Lists and were edited from the sample. Within a Local Authority, addresses were grouped into a number of geographically contiguous 'interviewer areas' containing an average of 100 addresses.

As described in Appendix 4, a third stage in the sample selection was introduced in the Vacant Property Survey follow-up, as only 1 in 2 of the interviewer areas in Non-Metropolitan Counties were included. Results in this report have been reweighted to take into account this subsampling of Non-Metropolitan addresses.

The grossing factor to be applied to results to gain national estimates from the VPS, using the inverse of the sampling fraction, would normally be 197.75 but, taking into account the underenumeration of vacant properties by the VPS, as described in Appendix 4, the grossing factor is 220 (ie $197.75 \times 2800/2510$). Further details about the nature and size of the sample and the methods adopted to identify vacant accommodation are given in Appendix 4.

Appendix 8 The calculation of vacancy rates

In Chapters 2 and 3 of this report, vacancy rates for different categories of housing included in the LFS sample were given. These were calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Vacancy rate (ie \% vacant)} = \frac{\text{number of vacant (and partly vacant) rateable units in category} \times 100}{\text{total number of rateable units in category}}$$

The number of vacant (and partly vacant) rateable units in each category has been estimated from the Vacant Property Survey results. These estimates are based on the revised figure for the total number of vacant units in the LFS sample of 2800 (rather than 2555). (See Appendix 4 Section A4.7). This means that the overall vacancy rate for properties in the sample is 3.3% (rather than 3.0%).

The total number of rateable units in each category in a sample the size of the LFS has been estimated using the NDHS results and, in the case of public and private sector housing, the VPS results were also used to estimate base numbers. In this case the estimates for vacant housing were added to those for occupied housing as this gave a significantly more accurate base for the small numbers of pre-1919 Local Authority housing.

In deriving both sets of estimates, for vacants and total numbers, certain assumptions have been made. It has been assumed that:—

- 1) In both the VPS and NDHS, the distributions of the variables of concern where answers were not recorded were the same as for those units where the information was recorded. In other words, because of the absence of evidence to indicate the overall direction of bias, if any, non-response has been assumed unbiased. (For example, in the NDHS, age of rateable unit was not recorded for 12% of purpose-built flats. For those where age was known, 8% were pre-1919 and 92%

post-1918. The 12% 'non-response' have therefore been allocated to the age groups in the ratio 8 to 92. This assumes that there was no bias in the non-response: that, for example, it was not mostly for pre-1919 flats that age was not known.)

- 2) The categories of the variables considered were defined and used in the same way on the NDHS and VPS. [For example, that age of building as recorded on valuation lists (NDHS source) is comparable with that obtained by interviewers in the field (VPS source).]
- 3) The configuration of the NDHS sample, in terms of the characteristics considered, was the same as that of the LFS sample from which the vacant units were actually identified.

Because the two sets of estimates used to calculate vacancy rates have been derived from two different samples, the sampling error associated with the rates is higher than if they had been derived from the same sample. (The variance is about doubled.) Hence, as noted in Table 2.13, rates for categories containing 300 or fewer rateable units should be treated with caution. This is particularly so because the numbers in the sample of vacants in these categories are small and the unweighted numbers (See Appendix 7), which are the ones to use when calculating sampling error, are even smaller.

- 4) In the case of vacancy rates for properties with and without basic amenities, the percentage lacking amenities amongst single household spaces applies to all rateable units, whether they comprise one or more household spaces.

Because of these assumptions made in calculating vacancy rates, the estimates are more liable to error than the initial survey data distributions.

Appendix 9 The questionnaires

Nine different questionnaires were used in the Vacant Property Survey, along with extra sections for two of them to be used as necessary. There were three main types of questionnaire—Recall, Accommodation and Owner.

The *Recall* questionnaire established whether or not the property had been vacant domestic living accommodation at the time of the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

The *Accommodation* questionnaire was concerned with the characteristics of the properties which had been vacant and collected some information about the vacancy in case no owner should be interviewed. Extra sections were to be used if more than one household space had been vacant in the rateable unit at the time of the LFS.

The *Recall & Accommodation* questionnaires were completed in interviews with people at, or in the vicinity of, the address. There were three versions of each of these types of questionnaire: one for interviewing occupants at the address, if it was occupied; one for interviewing people in the vicinity, if the property was still vacant or was demolished; and a third to be used if the property had been only partly vacant at the time of the LFS. (This third version included questions to be asked of owners, and asked about a vacant household space rather than a wholly vacant rateable unit.) If a vacancy had lasted for less than eight weeks, interviewers did not go on to contact owners. Otherwise attempts were made to contact those who owned the property during the vacancy, usually either one or two owners.

The *Owner* questionnaire covered the dates of the vacancy, of acquisition and/or sale, and building work together with the owner's plans for the property and any difficulties in implementing them. It also duplicated questions on the Accommodation questionnaire about the characteristics of the property.

There were three versions of the Owner questionnaire: one for private sector owners including current owner-occupiers and two for Local Authority owners, the first of which was similar in format to that used for private owners and could be used in complex cases, ie if there was more than one household space in the rateable unit or if the rateable unit had changed and been newly rated due to conversion during the vacancy. The second Local Authority questionnaire could be used for the majority of cases which were more straightforward and was designed in two parts, the first part being for self-completion.

The three versions of the Owner questionnaire were similar in their basic content though the private owner version contained questions directed to those intending to live in the properties whereas the Local Authority version included more questions relating to the demolition of properties and also to leasing units to Housing Associations.

Not all these questionnaires are reproduced in this report. One of each type is included: these being, the Recall and Accommodation questionnaire used if the unit was reoccupied at the time of the Vacant Property Survey and a Private Owner questionnaire. Part I (self-completion) of the Local Authority questionnaire is also included.

Recall Questionnaire

SS 1109

RECALL Q'RE -A-

WHOLE RU
SOME OCCUPANTS NOW

HOUSING
SURVEY
(V.P.)

Region No.	Area No.	Dist. No.	Address No.

Interviewer's

Name LA. District

Auth. no.

Date of first contact

on this survey

II

SURVEY REFERENCE DATE FOR THIS RU.	DAY	MTN	YR.
			77

1 Issued for Recall:

WHOLE RATEABLE UNIT

which is: CURRENTLY WHOLLY OR PARTLY OCCUPIED
[CURRENTLY WHOLLY VACANT]
[NOW DEMOLISHED]

1

SEEK
OCCUPIER

TO OCCUPIER

2 [I'm we're carrying out a housing survey for the
Department of the Environment. I've been asked to
call on this ...RU.... I'm not quite sure who I
need to talk to but could I just check]

a) Is the ..RU.. just one whole
..HOUSE/FLAT.. or is it divided
up into flats or flatlets or
separately occupied or rented
parts?

Whole HOUSE/FLAT
Divided up

1
2

GO TO Q3
ASK b)

IF DIVIDED UP

b) How many flats, flatlets or
separate parts are there in this
..RU.., that is including this
one and any that are vacant at
the moment?

No. of h'hd spaces in
RU now

SEE i)

1) COMPLETE A COLUMN ON PAGES 2-3 FOR EACH H'HD SPACE

RECALL Q'RE -A-

RECALL ON WHOLE RU
SOME OCCUPANTS NOW

INTERVIEWER CODE

ELIGIBILITY FOR INTERVIEW
[From Pages 2 & 3]

		DOMESTIC H'HD SPACES	
8 a) How many domestic h'hd spaces are there? [i.e. total coded 1 or 2 at Q5]	None	0	END
	No. of H'hd spaces on II	99	SEE b)
	DK		

		VACANT DOMESTIC H'HD SPACES	
b) How many domestic h'hd spaces were vacant on II? [i.e. total coded 2 at Q5]	None	0	END
	No. of vacant H'hd spaces on II	99	SEE Q9
	DK		

9 CODE... ..ALL DOMESTIC H'HD SPACES VACANT ON II/ALL ELIGIBLE ..	1	SEE Q10 & GO TO ACCOM Q'RE 1
..SOME DOMESTIC H'HD SPACES VACANT ON II/SOME ELIGIBLE.	3	SEE Q10 & GO TO ACCOM Q'RE 3

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION

10 a) FOR EACH ELIGIBLE H'HD SPACE -:

- 1) IF IT IS CURRENTLY OCCUPIED - Interview the occupier
- 2) IF IT IS CURRENTLY VACANT - Interview a neighbour in RU.

NB - IF THE PERSON YOU ARE TALKING TO IS ELIGIBLE FOR INTERVIEW, ask him first about his h'hd space then about any eligible currently vacant ones.

- IF THE PERSON YOU ARE TALKING TO IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR INTERVIEW, but there are some eligible h'hd spaces currently vacant, try to interview him about them.

b) LEAVE YOURSELF AN OPPORTUNITY TO GO BACK TO ANY INFORMANT, IF LIKELY TO WANT TO ASK ABOUT OTHER H'HD SPACES.

c) NON-RESPONSE - IF ELIGIBLE BUT NO FURTHER INFORMATION OBTAINABLE, ON ACCOMMODATION Q'RE, COMPLETE COVER PAGES (Q's 11-14) AND (Q111 & 112).

W485A OPCS 7/77

IF MORE THAN ONE N'ED SPACE IN RU NOW (QLI(1) = 2 or more)

22 Buildings may be divided up differently at different times because of changes in ownership or letting arrangements.

I believe the ... RU ... is currently divided up as follows: FLATS/PARTS. When it was last occupied, was the ... RU ... divided up into the same [] FLATS/FLATLETS/PARTS or was it arranged differently then?

same FLATS ETC then
arranged differently then ...
DK
1
2
3

CODE 3 AT Q25
SEE a)
GD TO Q25

a) DESCRIBE POSITION IN BUILDING OF FLATS (RU) NOW AND WHEN LAST OCCUPIED

IF DIFFERENT THEN (Q22 CODE 2)

23 Was the change brought about by conversion while the ... RU ... was vacant, or was it just a change in letting arrangement?
both
other (SPECIFY)

24 How many FLATS/FLATLETS/PARTS were there in (the equivalent of) this ... RU ... last time it was occupied?
less than one
.....
98
DK
99

25 Do any of the present flats/flatlets cover substantially the same part of the building as a flat that was here (there) before the vacancy?

All subat. same/
all match
Some subat. same/
some match
None subat. same/
none match
DK
3
4
5
9

26 Thinking back to the period of the vacancy, (Can I just check) Was there any reconstruction, conversion modernisation or major repair work carried out while the ... RU ... was vacant?

Yes
No
DK
1
2
3

27 IF MORE THAN ONE N'ED SPACE NOW (QLI(1) = 2 OR MORE)

Did the (work) affect all of the FLATS or not?

DK OTHERS ..
All flats
Not all flats ..
DK
Y
1
2
3

28 IF RU IS PART OF BUILDING (QLI CODE 2)

Did the (work) affect the rest of the building or just the ... RU ...?

DK OTHERS ..
Rest of building too ..
Just the RU
DK
Y
1
2
3

29 Could you look at this card and tell me what kind of work was done?

SHOW CARD A
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

STRUCTURAL CHANGES/ADDITIONS	REPAIRS	MODERNISATION
1 Interior exted	1 Roofing/Glazing ..	1 Rewiring (lights) ...
2 Extensions built	2 Glazing	2 Redraining (points) ...
3 Walls changed	3 Reputing oil:	3 Water heating system ...
4 Other built	4 Window line frames ..	4 Central heating
5 Other (SPECIFY)	5 Frames	5 New bath(s)
6 Foundations	6 Repairs	6 New sand basin(s) ...
7 Ramp course	7 Repainting	7 New toilet(s)
8 Dry rot treatment	8 Dry rot treatment	8 Other (SPECIFY)
9 Ventilation	9 Ventilation	9 Ventilation
10 Other (SPECIFY) ..	10 Other (SPECIFY) ..	10 Other (SPECIFY) ..

30a) What month did the ... (work) start?

DK
MTN
99
YR

b) What month did the ... (work) finish?

DK
MTN
99
YR

IF NOT YET FINISHED, ENTER 98

* RING IF DKS

SEE Q27

GO TO Q31

SEE Q28

ASK Q29

31. INTERVIEWER CHECK (WITH INFORMANT)

a) IF ONE H'HD SPACE IN RU NOW (Q11(1) = 1)

1	GO TO Q32a)
2	GO TO Q32b)
9	SEE c)

b) IF MORE THAN ONE H'HD SPACE IN RU NOW (Q11(1) = 2 OR MORE)

3	GO TO Q32a)
4	GO TO Q32a)4b)
5	GO TO Q32b)
9	SEE c)

32a) MATCHING H'HD SPACES - SECTION A(s)

CURRENT H'HD SPACE SER. NO.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Reoccupied since II ...	1	1	1	1	1	1
Still vacant ...	2	2	2	2	2	2

1) FOR EACH CURRENT H'HD SPACE, OBTAIN DATE III & DATE I INFO. ON A SECTION A.

32b) NON-MATCHING H'HD SPACES - SECTION A(s) & SECTION B

CURRENT H'HD SPACE SER. NO.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Reoccupied since II ...	1	1	1	1	1	1
Still vacant ...	2	2	2	2	2	2

11) FOR EACH CURRENT H'HD SPACE, OBTAIN DATE III INFO. ON A SECTION A

111) FOR EACH DATE I H'HD SPACE (NON-MATCHING) OBTAIN DATE I INFO.

1111) FOR EACH DATE I H'HD SPACE (NON-MATCHING) OBTAIN DATE I INFO.

11111) FOR EACH DATE I H'HD SPACE (NON-MATCHING) OBTAIN DATE I INFO.

111111) FOR EACH DATE I H'HD SPACE (NON-MATCHING) OBTAIN DATE I INFO.

DATE I H'HD SPACE POSITION IN RU/CURRENT SER. NO.

TOTAL NO.

OF DATE I H'HD SPACES
NON-MATCHING
H'HD SPACES.

GO TO Q41

CURRENT H'HD SPACE - REOCCUPIED SINCE II

H'HD SPACE	
------------	--

Description of H'HD SPACE

II	77
----	----

INFORMANT

INTRODUCTION AS APPROPRIATE (ASK Q's FOR FIRST RE-OCCUPIERS SINCE II - Q38(1))

41 (Can you tell me) What date did you and your household move into the ... H'HD SPACE... that is, move in with the bulk of your belongings?

DATE REOCCUPIED/REOCCUPIED BY OCCUPIER MOVED IN	DATE	DAY	MONTH	YEAR
		99	99	77

42 IF CURRENT H'HD SPACE MATCHES DATE I H'HD SPACE (SEE Q32) I'd like to ask about the length of time the H'HD SPACE ... was vacant. (Can you tell me) What date did the previous occupiers move out of the H'HD SPACE? What date did you and your household move in with the bulk of their belongings?

DATE PREVIOUS OCCUPIERS MOVED OUT	DATE	DAY	MONTH	YEAR
		99	99	99

43 INTERVIEWER CHECK-DATE I is before II YES, VACANCY AROUND II

NO

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

TO OCCUPIER
(DATE OCCUPIER MOVED IN AFTER II)

45a) Thinking about the time you spent in the ...H'HD SPACE... How many people were there in your household?	Total people in h/hd	1	2	3	4
b) How many were ...	...Adults 60 or over?	1	2	3	4
IF NONE, WRITE IN '0'	...Adults 16-59 yrs?	1	2	3	4
	...Children under 16 yrs	1	2	3	4
46 Do you own or rent this... H'HD SPACE or do you live in it rent free?	Owns/is buying	1	2	3	4
	Rents	1	2	3	4
	Rent free	1	2	3	4
IF OWNS	Owner for all vacancy ...	1	2	3	4
47 Thinking about the ... H'HD SPACE Did you own it then or have you acquired it during the vacancy (or since you moved in on ...II...)?	Acquired during vacancy	1	2	3	4
	Acquired since/on ...II...	1	2	3	4
IF ACQUIRED DURING VACANCY (Q47 CODE 2)	DATE ACQUIRED FROM	DAY	MTN	YR	
48a) What date did you legally acquire the H'HD SPACE?	DATE ACQUIRED FROM	DAY	MTN	YR	
b) So the ...H'HD SPACE ... was vacant for while you were the owner.	under 1 wk	1	2	3	4
	1 wk less than 4 wks	1	2	3	4
	4 wks less than 8 wks	1	2	3	4
	8 wks less than 12 wks	1	2	3	4
	12 wks less than 26 wks/6 mths	1	2	3	4
	6 mths less than 1 year	1	2	3	4
	1 year less than 2 years	1	2	3	4
	2 years less than 5 years	1	2	3	4
	5 years or more	1	2	3	4
	other (SPECIFY)	1	2	3	4
49 IF MORE THAN ONE H'HD SPACE IN RU NOW	DNA - OTHERS	Y			
Do you own the rest of the ..RU.. or not?	Yes, owns rest of RU	1	2	3	4
a) Was the ..RU.. all vacant when you acquired it, or not?	No	1	2	3	4

IF RENTED (OR RENT FREE)

50 Is the ... H'HD SPACE ... rented from (provided by ...) the ...	Local Auth./New Town Housing Assoc.	1	2	3	4
RUNNING PRIVATE LANDLORD/COMPANY	a private landlord/ or company	1	2	3	4
PROPERT	or someone else?	1	2	3	4
51 Is the ...H'HD SPACE... rented (provided) .. furnished? .. or unfurnished? ..	..... (SPECIFY)	1	2	3	4
52 You said you moved in with the bulk of your belongings on ... III... *IF RENTED did you actually start renting the ... H'HD SPACE ...?	DATE MOVED IN (PROVIDED) FROM	DAY	MTN	YR	
IF RENTED	DATE MOVED IN (PROVIDED) FROM	DAY	MTN	YR	
53 So can I just check, you rented (had) the ...H'HD SPACE... for wks/mths before you moved in on ...II...?	under 1 wk	1	2	3	4
	1 wk up to 2 wks	1	2	3	4
	2 wks up to 4 wks	1	2	3	4
	4 wks up to 8 wks	1	2	3	4
	8 wks up to 12 wks	1	2	3	4
	12 wks or more	1	2	3	4
	Other (SPECIFY)	1	2	3	4
54 IF FOR 2 MS OR MORE (Q53 CODED 3-6(7)) DNA - OTHERS	DNA - OTHERS	Y			
Was there any particular reason why you were delayed in moving in, or not?	Yes, reason	1	2	3	4
IF YES	No	1	2	3	4
a) What was the reason?		1	2	3	4
55 IF MORE THAN ONE H'HD SPACE IN RU NOW	DNA - OTHERS	Y			
Do you rent the rest of the ..RU.. or not?	Yes, rents rest of RU..	1	2	3	4
	No	1	2	3	4

DATE III

ASK Q's 56-62 PRECEDED BY

"When you moved in on ..III.."

DATE I

IF H'HO SPACE MATCHES

COPIES	ASK
QMA:NOT - Y	Q56-62
QMA: MATCH	Q111

ONLY

ASK Q's 56-62

IF OCCUPIED BEFORE (Q15 CODES 1-3)

"When the previous occupants moved

out on ..I.."

IF TALKING TO PREVIOUS OCCUPIER

on ..I.."

IF YES BLC (Q15 CODE 4, ..I.."

"When the ..RU.. was first completed,...."

[I'd like to talk about the
rooms and amenities in
the ..H'HO SPACE... when ..]6 how many rooms
were(are) there, excluding
kitchens, bathrooms,
hallways or landings?
(INCLUDE BLOSSITING ROOMS)DESCRIBE ANY ROOM NOT SURE
OF AND EXCLUDE IT FROM TOTAL

DATE III	DATE I	DATE I
AFTER VACANCY	BEFORE VACANCY	BEFORE VACANCY
NO. OR ROOMS	99
OK	99

57 did (does) the
accommodation have a
kitchen, that is, a
separate room for cooking
(EXC KITCHEN IN BEDSIT
ROOM)a) Was (is) the narrowest
side of the kitchen
from wall to wall or
was (is) it more than
that?

Had kitchen	1	ASK a)
No	2	CO
OK	3	Q58
less than 6 ft ...	1	
6 ft or more	2	
OK	3	

INTERVIEWER CODE OR ASK
58 was (is) the main
living room of the
accommodation ...(RUNNING
PROMPT)

below grd level	1	
on ground level	2	
on 1st floor	3	
on 2nd floor	4	
on 3rd to 5th floor	5	
6th or higher?	6	
OK	7	

10

101

PLANS IF OKS	ASK Q59-62 FOR III ONLY
-----------------	----------------------------

COPIES	ASK
QMA:NOT - Y	Q59-62
QMA: MATCH	Q111

DATE III

DATE I

DATE I

DATE I

DATE I

DATE I

DATE I

BEFORE VACANCY

BEFORE VACANCY

BEFORE VACANCY

BEFORE VACANCY

BEFORE VACANCY

BEFORE VACANCY

BEFORE VACANCY

BEFORE VACANCY

4) 111

4) 111

4) 111

4) 111

4) 111

4) 111

4) 111

4) 111

BATH, BASIN, SINK

BATH, BASIN, SINK

BATH, BASIN, SINK

BATH, BASIN, SINK

BATH, BASIN, SINK

BATH, BASIN, SINK

BATH, BASIN, SINK

BATH, BASIN, SINK

accommodation have,

accommodation have,

accommodation have,

accommodation have,

accommodation have,

accommodation have,

accommodation have,

accommodation have,

1) a fixed bath or

1) a fixed bath or

1) a fixed bath or

1) a fixed bath or

1) a fixed bath or

1) a fixed bath or

1) a fixed bath or

1) a fixed bath or

shower with piped

shower with piped

shower with piped

shower with piped

shower with piped

shower with piped

shower with piped

shower with piped

water supply?

water supply?

water supply?

water supply?

water supply?

water supply?

water supply?

water supply?

1) a sink

1) a sink

1) a sink

1) a sink

1) a sink

1) a sink

1) a sink

1) a sink

with piped water

with piped water

with piped water

with piped water

with piped water

with piped water

with piped water

with piped water

supply?

supply?

supply?

supply?

supply?

supply?

supply?

supply?

IF YES, HMO 1) 111

IF YES, HMO 1) 111

IF YES, HMO 1) 111

IF YES, HMO 1) 111

IF YES, HMO 1) 111

IF YES, HMO 1) 111

IF YES, HMO 1) 111

IF YES, HMO 1) 111

a) have been

a) have been

a) have been

a) have been

a) have been

a) have been

a) have been

a) have been

supply running to

supply running to

supply running to

supply running to

supply running to

supply running to

supply running to

supply running to

it, or not?

it, or not?

it, or not?

it, or not?

it, or not?

it, or not?

it, or not?

it, or not?

b) ... was(is) the ...

b) ... was(is) the ...

b) ... was(is) the ...

b) ... was(is) the ...

b) ... was(is) the ...

b) ... was(is) the ...

b) ... was(is) the ...

b) ... was(is) the ...

sole use or was(is)

sole use or was(is)

sole use or was(is)

sole use or was(is)

sole use or was(is)

sole use or was(is)

sole use or was(is)

sole use or was(is)

it normally shared?

it normally shared?

it normally shared?

it normally shared?

it normally shared?

it normally shared?

it normally shared?

it normally shared?

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

a) ... did(does) the

a) ... did(does) the

a) ... did(does) the

a) ... did(does) the

a) ... did(does) the

a) ... did(does) the

a) ... did(does) the

a) ... did(does) the

have the use of 1

have the use of 1

have the use of 1

have the use of 1

have the use of 1

have the use of 1

have the use of 1

have the use of 1

the entrance inside

the entrance inside

the entrance inside

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the entrance inside

the entrance inside

the entrance inside

the entrance inside

the building?

the building?

the building?

the building?

the building?

the building?

the building?

the building?

IF NO OR OK 1v)

IF NO OR OK 1v)

IF NO OR OK 1v)

IF NO OR OK 1v)

IF NO OR OK 1v)

IF NO OR OK 1v)

IF NO OR OK 1v)

IF NO OR OK 1v)

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

MC INSIDE, MC OUTSIDE

a) ... was(is) the ...

a) ... was(is) the ...

a) ... was(is) the ...

a) ... was(is) the ...

a) ... was(is) the ...

a) ... was(is) the ...

a) ... was(is) the ...

a) ... was(is) the ...

for household's (is)

for household's (is)

for household's (is)

for household's (is)

for household's (is)

for household's (is)

for household's (is)

for household's (is)

if normally shared?

if normally shared?

if normally shared?

if normally shared?

if normally shared?

if normally shared?

if normally shared?

if normally shared?

HEATING

HEATING

HEATING

HEATING

HEATING

HEATING

HEATING

HEATING

Yes, had

Yes, had

Yes, had

Yes, had

Yes, had

Yes, had

Yes, had

Yes, had

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

No

OK

OK

OK

OK

OK

OK

OK

OK

Sole use

Sole use

Sole use

Sole use

Sole use

Sole use

Sole use

Sole use

Shared ...

Shared ...

Shared ...

Shared ...

Shared ...

Shared ...

Shared ...

Shared ...

DK

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DK

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DK

DK

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2

2

2

2

2

2

2

2

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

4

4

4

4

DATE I
DATE OCCUPANT MOVED OUT BEFORE II

63 IF OCCUPIED BEFORE (Q15 CODES 1-3) DINA: NEW HLG(Q15 CODE 4)
AND IF H'HD SPACE MATCHES DINA: DOES NOT MATCH ...

Thinking about the previous
occupants who moved out on...
a) (Do you know) how many people
were there in the household?

b) (Do you know) how many were ...

IF NONE, WRITE IN '0'

Total people in a h'd ..
DK ..
99
... Adults 60 or over?
DK ..
99
... Adults 16-59 yrs?
DK ..
99
... Children under 16 yrs?
DK ..
99

64 Did they own or rent
the ... H'HD SPACE .. (or
live in it rent free)?

1 SEE Q67
2 ASK Q65
3 SEE Q67

IF RENTED (RENT FREE)

65 Was the ... H'HD SPACE ... rented from...
(provided by ...)

Local Auth./New Town ...
a Housing Assoc.
a private landlord/
company
or someone else?
.....(SPECIFY)
DK ..

66 (Do you know) Was the ... H'HD
SPACE...rented (provided)...

1 SEE Q67
2 or unfurnished?
3 DK ..

SEE Q70

Y

DNA - OTHERS

67 IF ... H'HD SPACE ... WAS VACANT FOR
8 OR MORE WEEKS
OR MORE MONTHS
OR MORE YEARS

(Q44 CODED 4-9(10) OR 11)

(You've told me) the ... H'HD SPACE ...
was vacant for WKS/MHS/YRS.
(Specify)
H'HD SPACE ... vacant for that
length of time?

SEE Q70

SECTION B

NON-MATCHING H'ND SPACES - DATE 1 INFORMATION

Y	GO TO Q99
B	ASK SECTION B

8D SECTION B APPLIES IF ANY CURRENT H'ND SPACE DOES NOT MATCH DATE 1 H'ND SPACE (SEE Q24)

DNA - ALL MATCH

ALL/SOME NON-MATCHING

OBTAIN DATE 1 INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION

--	--	--

70 GO TO ANY FURTHER SECTION'S I'S, UNLESS THIS INFORMANT CAN HELP YOU WITH, THEN SEE SECTION B, Q80

NOTE: Section B has not been reproduced in this report

FOR ALL WHOLE RU

99 INTERVIEWER CHECK (SEE NOTES BELOW)

WAS ANY PART OF THE RU VACANT FOR 8

OR MORE WEEKS AROUND 11?

None vacant 8+ wks

DK if any vacant 8+ wks

CODE 1 - (YES, VACANT 8+ WKS) IF

ANY STILL VACANT (Q11 141)= 1 OR MORE

OR ANY SECTION 3 Q44 CODED 4-9(10)

OR IF SECTION 3 APPLIES, Q97 CODED 1

CODE 3 - (DK IF VACANT 8+ WKS) IF

NO CODE 1'S ABOVE

AND ANY SECTION 3'S Q44 CODED 11 (OR BLANK)

OR IF SECTION 3 APPLIES, Q97 CODED 3

[I's like to talk next about the pattern of
ownership of the .RU.. over the vacancy period]

100 IF CURRENT OWNER IS OWNER-OCCUPIER

INMA: OTHER-
OWNER

Y

DID THE CURRENT OWNER-OCCUPIER

OWN THE RU ON (EARLIEST)

THAT IS, FOR ALL THE VACANCY?

Yes, owned all vacancy

No, didn't

2

IF NO CURRENT OWNER-OCCUPIER

101 a) Who owns the .RU.. now?

Name &

Address

AGENT

1

Name &

Address

AGENT

1

Name &

Address

AGENT

1

Name &

Address

AGENT

1

Name &

Address

AGENT

1

Name &

Address

AGENT

1

Name &

Address

AGENT

1

b) Did the present owner own

the .RU.. at the beginning

of the vacancy, that is,

on the .(EARLIEST) 1..?

Yes, owned all vacancy

No, didn't

2

DK ..

3

IF NOT

4) What date did the present

owner acquire the .RU..?

DK

99

99

99

99

99

99

102 a) Who owned the .RU..
before the present owner (you)?

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

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Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

Name &

Address

AGENT

2

b) Did .owner 2.. own
the .RU.. at the beginning
of the vacancy, that is,
on the .(EARLIEST) 1..?

Yes, owned on (EARLIEST) 1

No, didn't

2

DK ..

3

IF OWNER 2 DID NOT OWN ON (EARLIEST) 1

103 Who owned the .RU..
before that?

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

Name &

Address

AGENT

3

104 IF INFORMANT IS CURRENT OWNER-OCCUPIER
AND OWNED (OR ACQUIRED) DURING VACANCY
(OR OWNED (OR ACQUIRED) DURING VACANCY
OR (IS ANOTHER OWNER DURING VACANCY)EXPLAIN WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK HIM
ABOUT THE DECISIONS AND PROBLEMS
THAT HE ENCOUNTERED IN ACQUIRING THE PROPERTY
DURING THE VACANCY

DK ..

9

SEE Q105

OO TO OWNER Q102

I've asked you a lot of information (about the time before you lived here), and some of it you didn't know.

a) Would you have any objection if I asked someone else around here about those points on the past history of the HOUSE/FLAT?

b) IF NO OBJECTION

Do you have any suggestions as to who may be able to help me. (I will ask them if I can.)
I have already spoken to you, unless you prefer me not to, and that you have no objection to me asking them if they are able to help).

Name(s)
Address(es)
.....
.....
.....
.....

c) MAKE ALL RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD CALLS, THEN GO TO Q106

SUMMARY OF ACCOM. Q'BE AFTER MAKING ALL RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD CALLS

INTERVIEWER TO COMPLETE

106	Has (at least part of) the RU vacant for 8 or more weeks around ...? (SEE Q99)	Yes, vacant 8+ weeks No, not DK if vacant 8+ wks	1 2 3	GO TO Q107 GO TO Q110 GO TO Q107
107	How many owners are involved in the vacancy period, including any current owner-occupier?	No. of owners	SEE a)	
	a) EXCLUDING ANY CURRENT OWNER-OCCUPIER, (C) HOW MANY OWNERS ARE INVOLVED IN THE VACANCY (SEE Q'S 101, 102, 103), GIVING ALL THE DETAILS YOU HAVE			
108	Excluding the current owner-occupier do you have the address of any of the owners?	Yes, have address(es) No, have none	1 2	GO TO a) GO TO Q110
	a) Are any of the addresses you have for Local Authority owners, or not?	Yes, (all) LA Some LA None LA	1 2 3	GO TO Q110 GO TO Q109
109	Are any of the addresses of the non-LA owners in your area?	Yes, all in area Yes, some in area ... None in area	1 2 3	SEE a) GO TO Q110
110	IF YES (Q109 CODE 1 OR 2)			
	a) CONTACT NON-LA OWNER(S) IN YOUR AREA AND ASK THEM: THE OWNER IS A BIG PROPERTY OWNER AND SEEMS LIKELY TO HAVE PROPERTY ELSEWHERE IN OUR SAMPLE. SEND THEIR OWNER SAMPLE SHEET(S) TO HQ FOR RE-ALLOCATION			
	b) How many owners (exc. current owner-occupier, LA & big property owner) have you contact in your area for this ...RU...?	No. of owners contacted to contact		
111	INTERVIEWER - DESPATCH OF DOCUMENTS			
	1) SEND OWNER SAMPLE SHEETS FOR LA OWNER, BIG PROPERTY OWNERS AND OWNERS NOT IN YOUR AREA BACK TO HQ STRAIGHTAWAY, FOR RE-ALLOCATION.			
	44) IF DK ADDRESS OF ANY OWNER, KEEP THAT OWNER'S SAMPLE SHEET UNTIL ALL INTERVIEWS FOR THAT RU ARE COMPLETED IN YOUR AREA.			
	441) WHEN ALL INTERVIEWS COMPLETED FOR AN RU, SEND Q'RES TOGETHER TO HQ.			

R.B. HAVE YOU COMPLETED PAGE 28.

FOR ALL ELIGIBLE RU's - DESCRIPTION		FROM OBSERVATION		IF RU IS PART ONLY OF BUILDING		COMPLETE COL 1) ONLY	
COMPLETE Q's 111 & 112		1) The RU currently ...		1) The Building currently RU IS DNA: WHOLE - Y BLG			
FROM OBSERVATION							
111a)	.... looks wholly vacant	1		1		
	.... looks partly vacant/partly occupied	2		2		
	.... looks wholly occupied	3		3		
	.... can't tell	4		4		
b)	.... is (partly) bricked/boarded up	1		1		
	.... is not bricked or boarded up	2		2		
c)	.... is being repaired/improved	1		1		
	.... is not being repaired/improved	2		2		
	.... can't tell	3		3		
d)	.... has external structure in very poor condition					
	[derelict, very delapidated, gaps/holes in walls, windows, doors, roof, etc. in need of major repairs, not normally habitable]	..... 1		..... 1		
	.... in poor condition					
	[run down, neglected, uncared for, in need of moderate repairs to walls, windows, door, roof, etc.]	..... 2		..... 2		
	.... in fair condition					
	[structure appears good/ reasonable but dirty, dingy, old paint, in need of smartening up]	..... 3		..... 3		
.... in good/reasonable condition							
	[normal, good/reasonable, appears not in need of much painting, etc.]	..... 4		..... 4		
112	The neighbouring housing	all/most still standing		1		CODE a)	
	(50 yds either side of ..RU.. is	all/most now demolished		2			END DESCRIPTION
		RU is (6 was) isolated housing .		3			
a)	How much of the neighbouring housing is...	ALL	MOST	SOME	NONE		
i)	.. (partly) bricked/boarded up	1	2	3	4		
11)	.. in very poor/poor condition [Q114] SEE NOTES ON CODES]	1	2	3	4		
144)	.. similar age & type to RU	1	2	3	4	END DESCRIPTION	

Owner Questionnaire

SS1109

OWNER QUESTIONNAIRE

WHOLE RU VACANT ON II

HOUSING
SURVEY
(V.P)

Region No.	Area No.	Dist. No.	Address No.

Interviewer's

Name

LA District

Auth. No.

II	SURVEY	Day	Mth	Yr
	REFERENCE			
	DATE FOR			
	THIS RU			77

Date of
Interview

1. The informant is CURRENT OWNER-OCCUPIER 1 GO TO Q45
 OWNER (NOT CURRENT OWNER-OCCUPIER) 2
 OTHER (SPECIFY) 3 SEE Q2

2a) RU is ... still standing	1	c) TOTAL NO. OF OWNERS FOR THIS RU	
demolished	2		
b) ... whole building	1	d) SERIAL NO. FOR THIS OWNER	
part of building ..	2		

We are carrying out a survey for the Department of the Environment about property that is vacant or has fairly recently been vacant. We are tracing the histories of a random sample of properties which we believe were vacant, or partly vacant, when we called earlier in the year, and I would like to talk to you about address(es) that were selected in the sample.

[As far as I know this is (these are) the only address(es) that we would like to talk to you about but since the survey is being done nationwide there is a chance, if you own property over a wide area, that we may need to contact you again]

The property I would like to ask you about is (the RU)

We believe that it was vacant around about ... II ... and we are interested in the period from when it was first wholly or partly vacant/(if new building - when it was completed) until it was re-occupied/or demolished/or until now if it is still vacant.

- 3 Can I just check have you owned this ..RU.. for any part of the time it was vacant, or not? Yes, owned during vacancy 1 GO TO Q4
 No, didn't 2 SEE a)

a) CHECK ADDRESS AGAIN
 AND ASK IF HE KNOWS OR
 CAN SUGGEST ANYONE WHO
 WOULD KNOW WHERE TO GO.

LATER/AFTER VACANCY

30 IF RE-OCCUPIED WHILE OWNED (Q11 CODE 4 OR 5)

(Next I'd like to ask a few details about the ..RU.. after the vacancy, when it was re-occupied)

ONE H'HD SPACE OR DK MORE THAN ONE H'HD ALL OWNED
 SPACE (Q11 CODE 2) All rented (rent free).
 BUT THE ..RU.. LIVED IN THE FLATS Some owned/home rent ..
 the vacancy own or after the vacancy DK.
 rent the ..RU.. on them or rent
 (live there rent free)? (live there rent free)?

IF RENTED (RENT FREE) IF RENTED (RENT FREE)

a) ..Was the ..RU.. ..Here the (RENTED) ..

FLATS rented from L.Auth/New Town ...

(provided by) the.. Housing Assoc ...

Private landings/ company 2

or someone else? 3

..... (SPECIFY) 4

DK .. 5

b) ..Was the ..RU.. ..Here the (RENTED) ..

FLATS rented (provided) All furnished 1

DK .. 2

Some furn./some not furnished? 3

DK .. 4

TO ALL ASK Q's 31-37 PRECEDED BY

IF STILL VACANT NOW-"At the present (or when conversion completed,

at all...) .."

IF REMAINED VACANT TILL SOLD-"When you sold the ..RU.., ..."

IF REMAINED VACANT TILL DEMOLISHED-"When it was demolished, ..."

IF REMAINED VACANT TILL DEMOLISHED-"When the people moved in after the vacancy, ..."

31 how many rooms are 1

(were) there 2

DK .. 3

DK .. 4

DK .. 5

DK .. 6

DK .. 7

DK .. 8

DK .. 9

DK .. 10

DK .. 11

DK .. 12

DK .. 13

DK .. 14

DK .. 15

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DK .. 243

DK .. 244

DK .. 245

DK .. 246

DK .. 247

DK .. 248

DK .. 249

DK

I'd like to talk next about the length of the vacancy around II ...
(again you may not know all the details but ...)

START OF VACANCY

38 First of all I'd like to ask about the beginning of the vacancy
ONE H'ND SPACE OR OK
SPACE (Q14 CODE 2)
(Q14 CODE 1,3,4)

a) What date did the last occupiers before the vacancy. What date did the last flat become vacant?
(If RE-occupied - DATE OF COMPLETION)

b) DNA - What date had the first of the FLATS in the .RU.. become vacant? [EARLIEST]

DAY	MTW	YR
99	99	99

39 IF ALL STILL VACANT NOW (Q11 CODE 1)

ENTER TODAY'S DATE

DAY	MTW	YR
77		

40 IF VACANT TILL SOLD (Q11 CODE 2)
(Do you know) Was the .RU.. re-occupied after you sold it?

a) Was it occupied as a whole .RU.. or was it divided up into FLATS?

DAY	MTW	YR
1		
2		
3		

DAY	MTW	YR
77		

41 IF REMAINED VACANT TILL DEMOLISHED (Q11 CODE 3)
What date was the .RU.. demolished?

DAY	MTW	YR
77		

42 IF WHOLLY OR PARTLY RE-OCCUPIED (Q11 CODE 4,5 OR Q40 CODE 1)
ONE H'ND SPACE OR OK
SPACE (Q15 CODE 2)
OR (Q40a CODE 1,3)
OR (Q40b CODE 2)

a) You said there were [Q15a..] FLATS after the last date was the first of the FLATS in the .RU.. re-occupied?

b) DNA - What date was the last of the FLATS re-occupied? (IF PART STILL VACANT, ENTER [TODAY'S DATE])

DAY	MTW	YR
77		

DAY	MTW	YR
99	99	99

DAY	MTW	YR
77		

DAY	MTW	YR
99	99	99

DAY	MTW	YR
77		

VACANCY LENGTH (50 FAR)

43 INTERVIEWER CHECK

BEFORE AND AFTER VACANCY, RU = ONE H'ND SPACE OR OK
AFTER VACANCY, RU = MORE THAN ONE H'ND SPACE
AT SOME POINT IN VACANCY, RU = MORE THAN ONE H'ND SPACE
(Q14, Q15, Q40a CODE 2).....

1
2

GO TO Q44
COL. 11)
GO TO Q44
COL. 11)
GO TO Q44
COL. 1-1v

44 VACANCY LENGTH	1) PART VACANT (part still occupied)	11) WHOLE RU VACANT	111) PART REOC (part still vacant)	11v) TOTAL IF Q43 CODE 2
CODE OR ASK	EARLIEST I to I to III (TODAY) III to LATEST (TODAY)	Q38a to Q42a (or to Q39/Q41)	Q42a to Q47b	
under 1 week	Y	Y	Y	Y
1 wk less than 4 wks	1	1	1	1
4 wks less than 8 wks	2	2	2	2
8 wks less than 12 wks	3	3	3	3
12 wks less than 26 wks/6 mths	4	4	4	4
6 mths less than 1 year	5	5	5	5
1 yr less than 2 yrs	6	6	6	6
2 yrs less than 3 yrs	7	7	7	7
3 yrs less than 4 yrs	8	8	8	8
4 yrs or more	9	9	9	9
...other (SPECIFY)	10	10	10	10
DK	11	11	11	11

45 (Can I just check) Have you been the owner for the time the .RU.. was

1) PARTLY VACANT

11) WHOLLY VACANT

111) PARTLY REOC

Y

DK

ONED FOR ALL ...

SOME ..

DK ..

START OF VACANCY [EARLIEST] I

DATE FOR TOUR OWN USE

(DATE ACQUIRED) (A)

(DATE SOLD) (S)

END OF VACANCY [LATEST] III OR TODAY

60 IF OWNED (OR ACQUIRED) WHEN WHOLE RU VACANT
(OR IF ACQUIRED WHEN PARTLY RE-OCCUPIED)
(Q45 ii) &/or ii) CODE 1 or 2)

* IF OWNED (OR ACQUIRED) WHEN WHOLE RU VACANT
(Q45 ii) CODE 1 or 2)

You said you owned the..RU..
when it was wholly vacant?
Could you look at this card &
tell me what you originally
planned to do with the..RU..
when it was wholly vacant?
(When you acquired it?)

* IF ACQUIRED WHEN PARTLY RE-OCCUPIED
(ONLY Q45 ii). CODE 1 or 2)

You said you acquired the..RU..
when it was partly re-occupied?
Could you look at this card &
tell me what you originally
planned to do with the..RU..
when you acquired it?

SHOW CARD B - CODE ONE ONLY

61 Why did you plan to do that?

PROBE FULLY

SEE Q64

Y

DNA - OTHERS

- 1 live in it(self)
- 2 live in some, let some
- 3 allow relatives/friends
- 4 leave it empty
- 5 let it
- 6 sell it
- 7 convert it to live in (self) ..
- 8 convert it for letting
- 9 convert it for sale
- 10 demolish it
- 11 or something else (SPECIFY)

ASK Q61

62 IF DID NOT PLAN TO LET
(Q60 CODE 1,3,4,6,7,9,10,(11),)
From what you say, you didn't plan
(want) to let the..RU..at that time.
Why didn't you plan (want) to let it?

PROBE FULLY

Y

DNA - Q60 CODE 2,5,8

SEE Q63

63 IF DID NOT PLAN TO SELL
(Q60 CODE 1-5,7,8,10,(11),)
From what you say, you didn't plan
(want) to sell the..RU..at that time.
Why didn't you plan (want) to sell it?

PROBE FULLY

Y

DNA - Q60 CODE 6,9

SEE Q64

SEE Q62

SEE Q64

<p>64 IF THIS OWNER IS CURRENT OWNER-OCCUPIER (Q1 CODE 1) (Can I just check) You live in the..RU..yourself, [is.. Q60 CODE 1,2,7] and that is [is not Q60 CODE 3-6,8-10,(11)] what you originally planned to do with the ..RU..</p>	<p>DWA - ALL OTHERS</p> <p>Y</p> <p>1 is original plan ...</p> <p>2 is not</p>	<p>SEE Q65</p> <p>SEE Q65</p> <p>ASK a)</p>	<p>66 Did you sell the..RU..to Local Auth./New Town a Housing Association a private owner or company or someone else? (SPECIFY)</p> <p>67 What month (& year) did you first try to sell the..RU..?</p> <p>68 Was there any delay in offering it for sale, or not? IF YES, DELAY a) What were the reasons for the delay? PROBE FULLY</p>	<p>YR</p> <p>Yes, delay</p> <p>No</p> <p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q69</p>
<p>65 IF OWNER SOLD DURING THE VACANCY (Q46 RATE 5, IS BEFORE END OF VACANCY) (Can I just check) You sold the..RU..during the vacancy, [and that is is.. Q60 CODE 6,9] what you originally planned to do with the..RU..</p>	<p>DWA - OTHERS</p> <p>Y</p> <p>1 is original plan ...</p> <p>2 is not</p>	<p>SEE Q71</p> <p>GO TO Q66</p> <p>ASK a)</p>	<p>69 Once the..RU..was offered for sale, did selling it take.... less time than you thought it would take... the same time as you thought it would take... longer than you thought it would take...?</p> <p>70 Did you have any difficulties in selling the..RU.., or not? IF YES, DIFFICULTIES a) What were the difficulties? PROBE FULLY</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q98</p>
<p>IF IS NOT ORIGINAL PLAN (Q65 CODE 2) a) Why did you change your plans from [..Q60..] to ..(living in it yourself)? PROBE FULLY</p>	<p>ASK Q66</p>	<p>PROBE FULLY</p>	<p>GO TO Q98</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q98</p>

76 IF GMS NOW AND STILL WHOLLY VACANT (Q11 CODE 1)	INA - OTHERS	GO TO Q98	79 IF STILL WHOLLY VACANT AND PLANNED/PLANS TO CONVERT, HOWEVER, ETC (Q77 CODE 7, 8, 9)	INA -	GO TO Q96 GO TO Q98 GO TO Q98 GO TO Q98 GO TO Q98 GO TO Q98	
(Can I just check) You told me earlier that the..RU.. is still vacant, and you also said you planned to...SEE Q60)... Do you still plan to do that or have your plans changed?	same plans changed plans	RECODE INTERVIEW AS Q77 ASK Q77				
77 IF CHANGED (Q76 CODE 2) Could you tell me from the card what you now plan to do with the..RU..? SHOW CARD B - CODE ONE ONLY	1 live in it (self) 2 live in some, let some 3 allow relatives/friends 4 leave it empty 5 sell it 6 convert to live in (self) 7 convert for letting 8 convert for sale 9 demolish it 10 11 something else (SPECIFY)		Yes, work finished (is Q77 CODE 7) Yes, work finished (is Q77 CODE 8) Yes, work finished (is Q77 CODE 9) No, work not finished	1 2 3 4	GO TO Q96 GO TO Q96 GO TO Q98 ASK Q80	
78 IF CHANGED (Q76 CODE 2) a) Why do you plan (want) to do that? PROBE FULLY	INA - NOT CHANGED	SEE Q79	80 IF WORK NOT FINISHED (Q79 CODE 4) Can you tell me why the..CONVERSION/WORK.. started yet, or not? 81 IF WORK NOT STARTED (Q80 CODE 2) Are there any particular reasons why the..WORK..hasn't started yet? IF YES, REASONS a) What are the reasons? PROBE FULLY	Yes, work started No, not started	1 2	GO TO Q83 ASK Q81 ASK a) GO TO Q82
b) Why did you change your plans from [..Q80..] to [..Q77..]? PROBE FULLY			82 When (what month/year) do you think the..WORK..will be started?	MTN	99	ASK Q82
		SEE Q79	83 When (what month/year) do you think the..WORK..might be finished?	WK	99	ASK Q83
				WK	99	GO TO Q98

<p>IF STILL WHOLLY VACANT AND PLANS TO SELL (Q77 CODE 6) OR (Q79 CODE 3)</p> <p>90 Have you tried to sell the..RU.. yet, or not?</p> <p>IF TRIED TO SELL</p> <p>a) What month (year) did you first try to sell the..RU..?</p>	<p>Yes, tried</p> <p>No, not tried</p> <p>MTN</p> <p>99</p> <p>99</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q94</p> <p>99</p> <p>99</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q95</p>
<p>91 Was there any delay in offering the..RU..for sale, or not?</p> <p>IF YES, DELAY</p> <p>a) What were the reasons for the delay?</p> <p>PROBE FULLY</p>	<p>Yes, delays</p> <p>No</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q92</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q95</p>
<p>92 Having offered the..RU.. for sale, is selling it taking</p>	<p>about the time you thought it would ..</p> <p>or more time than you thought it would?</p>	<p>2 ASK Q93</p> <p>3</p>	<p>1 ASK Q95</p> <p>2</p>
<p>93 Have you had any difficulties in selling the..RU.. or not?</p> <p>IF YES, DIFFICULTIES</p> <p>a) What were the difficulties?</p> <p>PROBE FULLY</p>	<p>Yes, difficulties</p> <p>No</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q95</p>
<p>94 Is there any particular reason why you haven't tried to sell the..RU..yet?</p> <p>IF YES, REASON</p> <p>a) What are the reasons?</p> <p>PROBE FULLY</p>	<p>Yes, reason</p> <p>No</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2</p>	<p>1 ASK a)</p> <p>2 GO TO Q95</p>
<p>95 When (what month/year) do you think you will sell it?</p>	<p>MTN</p> <p>99</p> <p>99</p>	<p>1 ASK Q92</p>	<p>1 ASK Q95</p> <p>2</p>
<p>96 When (what month/year) do you think you will sell it?</p>	<p>MTN</p> <p>99</p> <p>99</p>	<p>1 ASK Q92</p>	<p>1 ASK Q95</p> <p>2</p>

IF INTENDING TO LIVE IN, IN. (SELF)
(Q77 CODE 1,2) OR (Q79 CODE 1)

96 You said you (now) intend to live in your own apartment. Has there been any delay in your moving in, or not?

IF YES, DELAY

a) What are the reasons for the delay?

PROBE FULLY

Yes, delay	1	ASK a)																																													
No	2	GO TO Q97																																													
<p>98 Could you look at this card and tell me, even if you've mentioned them before, whether the things listed have particularly affected the <u>total</u> length of the vacancy, or not?</p> <p>PROBE AND CODE FOR EACH STATEMENT</p> <p>SHOW CARD C</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The general condition of property in the area ..</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The condition of the property itself</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Authority redevelopment policies</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Private re-development in the area</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General uncertainty about the future of the area ..</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Obtaining vacant possession</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Modernisation, conversion, renovation</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Obtaining planning permission or grants</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Legal aspects of selling property</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Awaiting settlement of wills, estates</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Winding up of companies, businesses</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The current mortgage situation</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The general financial situation</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The current state of the property market</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Yes	No	The general condition of property in the area ..	1	2	The condition of the property itself	1	2	Local Authority redevelopment policies	1	2	Private re-development in the area	1	2	General uncertainty about the future of the area ..	1	2	Obtaining vacant possession	1	2	Modernisation, conversion, renovation	1	2	Obtaining planning permission or grants	1	2	Legal aspects of selling property	1	2	Awaiting settlement of wills, estates	1	2	Winding up of companies, businesses	1	2	The current mortgage situation	1	2	The general financial situation	1	2	The current state of the property market	1	2
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<p>99 Are there any other things that you think have affected the length of the vacancy?</p>																																															

97 (Do you have any idea) when (what month/year) will you move in?

UNTIL MIGHT
MOVE IN

MTL YR

99

TO ALL

We have talked about the length of the vacancy and the reasons for it, and the changes and the decisions made (and problems) during the vacancy.

98 Could you look at this card and tell me, even if you've mentioned them before, whether the things listed have particularly affected the total length of the vacancy, or not?

PROBE AND CODE FOR EACH STATEMENT

SHOW CARD C

	Yes	No
The general condition of property in the area ..	1	2
The condition of the property itself	1	2
Local Authority redevelopment policies	1	2
Private re-development in the area	1	2
General uncertainty about the future of the area ..	1	2
Obtaining vacant possession	1	2
Modernisation, conversion, renovation	1	2
Obtaining planning permission or grants	1	2
Legal aspects of selling property	1	2
Awaiting settlement of wills, estates	1	2
Winding up of companies, businesses	1	2
The current mortgage situation	1	2
The general financial situation	1	2
The current state of the property market	1	2

99 Are there any other things that you think have affected the length of the vacancy?

```
CODE OR ASK
002 Can I just check
    in your capacity
    as an owner of
    this.RU..are(ver
    you .....
```

charity	6
Church Commissioners	7
Crown Commissioners	8
Government Dept	9
Nationalised Industry	10
other (SPECIFY)	11

(13 a) Is the company private or public-quoted?

b) Is the company mainly a property company, or not?
IF MAINLY PROPERTY COMPANY
i) Is it mainly concerned

with residential property, or not?

a) Which reason do you consider to be the one that contributed most to the length of the vacancy?

101 Thinking of vacant property in general. Do you have any suggestions as to what might help to reduce the length of time properties are vacant?

105 (To give us an indication of the extent of your ownership of property) Can you tell me approximately how many lettings, flats or houses you currently own in England & Wales
Is it?

PROMPT AS
NECESSARY

Q1 CODE1

GO BACK TO ACCOM. Q'RE AND ASK Q 105, ETC.

GO TO 0102

- 30 -

- 31 -

CLASSIFICATION		CODE OR ASK		GO TO Q103		GO TO Q105		GO TO Q103		GO TO Q104		GO TO Q105		GO TO Q105		GO TO Q105	
1	private individual(s)	1	ASK b)	2	ASK i)	3	GO TO Q105	4	GO TO Q103	5	GO TO Q104	6	GO TO Q105	7	GO TO Q105	8	GO TO Q105
2	non-charitable trust/executor	2	public-quoted	2	mainly property	2	GO TO Q105	3	company	4	housing association	5	charity	6	Church Commissioners	7	Crown Commissioners
3	partnership	2	not	2	mainly residential prop.	1	GO TO Q105	4	housing association	5	charity	6	Church Commissioners	7	Crown Commissioners	8	Government Dept
4	company	2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105	5	charity	6	Church Commissioners	7	Crown Commissioners	8	Government Dept	9	Nationalised Industry
5	housing association	2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105	6	Church Commissioners	7	Crown Commissioners	8	Government Dept	9	Nationalised Industry	10 other (SPECIFY)
6	charity	2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105	7	Crown Commissioners	8	Government Dept	9	Nationalised Industry	10 other (SPECIFY)	11 other (SPECIFY)
7	Church Commissioners	2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105	8	Government Dept	9	Nationalised Industry	10 other (SPECIFY)	11 other (SPECIFY)		
8	Crown Commissioners	2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105	9	Nationalised Industry	10 other (SPECIFY)	11 other (SPECIFY)				
9	Government Dept	2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105	10 other (SPECIFY)	11 other (SPECIFY)						
10	Nationalised Industry	2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105										
11 other (SPECIFY)	2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105										
		2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105										
		2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105										
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		2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105										
		2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105										
		2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105										
		2	not	2	not	2	GO TO Q105										
		2	not	2	not</												

107 INTERVIEWER CHECK

DOES THE OWNER SAMPLE
SHEET SHOW THAT ANY
OWNER INFORMATION
(NAMES AND ADDRESSES) IS UNKNOWN?

all known 1
some unknown... 2

END
ASK Q108

IF SOME OWNER INFORMATION (NAMES & ADDRESSES ETC) UNKNOWN

108 We are trying to trace and talk to
all the people who owned the..RU..
at some time during the vacancy ...

a) IF OWNER HAS A DATE ..A..
(SEE Q46)
(Do you know) who owned the..RU..before you?

DNA Y

OWNER ☐

AGENT

Name &
Address

SEE b)

DK 9

b) IF OWNER HAS A DATE ..S.. DURING THE VACANCY
(SEE Q 46 - S IS BEFORE END OF VACANCY)
(Do you know) who owned the..RU..after you?

DNA Y

OWNER ☐

AGENT

Name &
Address

SEE c)

DK 9

c) MAKE OUT (OR UPDATE) THE RELEVANT OWNER SAMPLE SHEET
FOR THE ABOVE OWNER AND CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS AS ON
PAGE 27 OF ACCOMMODATION Q'RE.

Local Authority Questionnaire Part I (self-completion)

KEY DATE Day Mth Yr
 7 7

THE KEY DATE
 FOR THE VACANCY
 IS SHOWN IN THIS CORNER

SS109
 Housing Survey
 Vacant Properties

Interviewer's Name
 Number
 Authority

PART I - SELF-COMPLETION QUESTIONNAIRE

Region No.	Area No.	Dist. No.	Address No.

Serial Number

The sampled rateable unit is in L.A. District of
 The address of the rateable unit (RU) is shown below.
 Please note the description of the RU, especially if it is only part of the building.

Address of Sampled Rateable Unit (RU)	Description of Rateable Unit (RU)

Q.1 In Spring 1977 when we called at this rateable unit (on the 'key date' shown top right), it was thought to be vacant or possibly vacant.
 In autumn 1977, when our interviewer called back at the rateable unit it was found to be:-

(a) .. the whole of the building	1	(b) and...still standing	1
.. only part of the building	2	...demolished	2

and it was thought that it was owned (while vacant) by this authority.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:-

Q.2 Has this authority ever owned this rateable unit (RU)?

Yes, own/owned RU	1	Please see to Q.3
No	2	Please see (4) Then give this continuing contact to ask about it?

IF NEVER OWNED RU

(4) Can you suggest who might contact to ask about it?

Before completing this questionnaire, please read these notes carefully.

Please answer all the questions which apply to this rateable unit. Many questions can be answered by ringing the code number beside the answer which is appropriate, as shown below:-

Q.1?

Yes	1
No	2

Beside some of the code numbers you will find instructions about which questions you should answer next. If there are no instructions, please go straight to the next question.

If the printed answers do not adequately cover the situation for this rateable unit, please write your answer in the space by the question. If you are not sure of the answer, please give an estimate or write 'don't know' ('DK'). If you have any queries about the questionnaire, please ask our interviewer.

Please note these survey definitions:-

The key date we refer to is the date we first called at the rateable unit in April/May 1977 and we identified it as a vacant living accommodation on that date. We wish to ask about the period of vacancy around that key date.

When we refer to 'this authority' we include any of the pre-1974 Local Authorities which are now part of the present authority.

The rateable unit (RU) is the building or part of the building that was sampled, at random, from the valuation lists in September, 1976.

'KEY DATE':-

'THIS AUTHORITY':-

RATEABLE UNIT:-
 (RU)

FOR ALL
Q.4 Is the rateable unit ...

FOR ALL
Q.3 (a) On our key date (shown top right) did the rateable unit contain domestic living accommodation?

... still standing	1	Please ring number
or now demolished	2	

Q.5 When was the building first built?

before 1870	1
1870 - 1899	2
1900 - 1938	3
1939 - 1944	4
1945 - 1969	5
1970 or later	6

If exact period unknown Please go to Q.7

Please go to Q.6

Yes, domestic	1	Answer (b)
No	2	Go to A

(b) On our key date, was the domestic living accommodation vacant?

Yes, vacant	1	Answer (c)
No	2	Go to A

(c) Did this authority own the rateable unit at any time during that vacancy?

Yes, owned	1	Go to B
No	2	Go to A

A. IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED 'NO' TO ANY OF (a), (b) or (c) at Q.3 Please answer (1). Then do not continue this questionnaire but give it to our interviewer, as she arranged with you.

(1) Please describe what the rateable unit was used for on our key date or who did own it during the vacancy.

→

B. IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED 'YES' TO ALL OF (a), (b) and (c) at Q.3 Does either of the next two box situations listed below apply to this rateable unit?

Please tick if applies

(1) The rateable unit comprised more than one accommodation unit (ie. flat or letting) either before or after the vacancy.

→

(11) The rateable unit that existed at the start of the vacancy was converted into a separate unit (eg. a house made into separately-rated flats).

→

IF (1) or (11) applies:-

Please do not continue this questionnaire but give it to our interviewer, as she arranged with you. We would like her to complete with you a more flexible questionnaire, which caters for complex situations.

IF (1) and (11) do not apply:-

Please complete the rest of this questionnaire (Pages 1-10)

FOR RATEABLE UNITS IN NEW BUILDINGS (ie. first built in 1970 or later)

Q.6 Had this rateable unit ever been occupied since its first date (shown top right) or not?

YES, occupied before then	1	Go to Q.7
NO, never occupied before	2	Please answer (a) & (b)

IF NEVER OCCUPIED BEFORE

(a) On what date* was the rateable unit first completed, ready for somebody to move into?

Day Mth Yr

Take this as start of vacancy.

(b) Did this authority own the rateable unit when it was first completed (ie. at the start of the vacancy)?

Please tick if applies

Yes, owned at start of vacancy	1	Go to Q.10
No, did not	2	Please answer (1)

(1) On what date* did this authority acquire the RUP?

Day Mth Yr

Please go to Q.10

* If exact date unknown, please give estimate

At the Start of the Vacancy

FOR ALL RENTABLE UNITS EVER OCCUPIED BEFORE OUR KEY DATE

Q.7 When the rateable unit was last occupied before our key date (shown top right), what was it used for?

Please
ring
number

- wholly for ordinary domestic living accommodation 1 Please go to Q.8
wholly for business or commercial premises 2 to Q.8
partly domestic and partly business/commercial premises 3 Please
or something else? 4 answer
(a)

(a) What was the rateable unit used for?

Please describe →
.....
.....

Q.8 On what date did the last occupiers before our key date (shown top right) move out of the rateable unit?

Day Mth Yr

Please write in date

Take this
as staff
of vacancy

If exact date unknown
please give estimated date,

Please go to Q.9.

the Start of the Vacancy

FOR ALL

Q.9 Did this authority own the rateable unit (RU) at the start of the vacancy?

Please
ring
number

- YES, L.A. owned at start of vacancy 1 Please answer
..... NO, did not 2 section (1)
below
Please answer
section (2)
below

Section (1) - L.A. owned at start of vacancy

(a) Before the vacancy was the RU rented ..
(line, if rent free) ..

- ... direct from this authority 1
... through a housing association 2
... or through another 'letting' organisation? 3

(b) Was the RU rented ..
(line, if rent free) .. furnished? 1 Please see
or unfurnished? 2 Q.10

Section (2) - L.A. did not own at start of vacancy

(a) On what date did this authority acquire the RU? → A

Day Mth Yr

If exact date unknown
please give estimate

(b) Before the vacancy,
did the occupiers ...

- ... own the rateable unit 1 Please see
rent from a housing association 2 Q.10
rent through another 'letting' organisation 3

..... or have some other tenure? 4 Please describe
then see Q.10

FOR THOSE RENTABLE UNITS WHICH ARE ONLY PART OF THE BUILDING
(i.e. At Q.1(a) Answer '2' is ringed)

Q.10 Does, or did, this authority own the rest
of the building as well as the rateable unit?

- Yes own/owned rest too 1
No 2

During or at the End of the Vacancy

FOR ALL

Q.11 What has happened to the rateable unit (RU) since it became vacant?

Please ring number of first statement that applies

- RU has remained vacant until now and is still owned by this authority 1 Please go to Q.15
- RU remained vacant until it was sold by this authority 2 Please go to Q.12
- RU remained vacant until it was demolished while owned by this authority 3 Please go to Q.13
- RU has been reconquered after our key date while owned by this authority 4 Please go to Q.14

FOR THOSE VACANT UNTIL SOLD

Q.12 On what date was the RU sold? →

If exact date unknown please give estimate

Day Mth Yr
S

FOR THOSE VACANT UNTIL DEMOLISHED

Q.13 On what date was the RU demolished? →

If exact date unknown please give estimate

Day Mth Yr

FOR THOSE RECONQUIRED

Q.14 (a) On what date was the RU reconquered? →

If exact date unknown please give estimate

(b) After the vacancy, was the RU rented ...

(inc. if rent free)

- ... direct from this authority 1 Please ring number
- ... through a housing association 2
- ... or through another 'letting' organisation? 3

(c) Was the RU rented ...

..furnished ..

or unfurnished? ..

Day Mth Yr

Please go to Q.15

Building work, modernisation, etc during the vacancy

FOR ALL

Q.15 During the vacancy has there been any reconstruction, modernisation or major repair work carried out to the rateable unit?

Please ring number

- Yes 1 Please go to Q.16
- No 2 Go to Q.19

FOR THOSE RATEABLE UNITS WHICH ARE ONLY PART OF THE BUILDING

Q.16 Has the work affected the rest of the building too? or just this rateable unit? →

1 Please go to Q.17

2

FOR ALL RATEABLE UNITS WHERE WORK CARRIED OUT

Q.17 What type of work was done (is being done)?

Please ring numbers of items which apply.

If exact details unknown, please make notes on the scope of the work done

STRUCTURAL CHANGES/ADDITIONS	REPAIRS TO	MODERNISATION OF RU
1 Roofing/Chimney	1 Rewiring (lights)	1
2 Exterior gutters	2 Rewiring (points)	2
3 Walls changed	3 Repointing walls	3
4 Garage built	4 Window inc. frames	4
Other (please describe)	5 Drains	5
	6 Foundations	6
	7 New hand basin(s)	7
	8 New sink(s)	8
	9 New toilet(s)	9
	10 Dry rot/woodworm	10
	11 Insulation	11
	Other (please describe)	12

Please go to Q.18.

Q.18 (a) When did the work start? →

Mth Yr

(b) When did the work finish? →

If work not yet finished please enter 'x' in this box →

FOR ALL

Q's 19-24 refer to 'After the Vacancy'

ie. Now if the RU is still vacant;
 when building work is completed, if the RU is still vacant and the work is now in progress;
 when sold, if vacant until sold by LA;
 when demolished, if vacant until demolished;
 or when it was reoccupied

Q.19 'After the vacancy' did (does) the RU have, or have the use of, a kitchen?

NOTE: 'Kitchen' = any room used for cooking in, unless also used as a bedroom or bed-sitting room.

Yes, RU had (use of) a kitchen

No, RU had no kitchen

Please
ring
number

1

2

Q.20 'After the Vacancy', how many other ROOMS were (are) there in the RU?

NOTE: (1) Please exclude--

kitchen, kitchen-diner, etc's
 bedrooms, bathrooms, etc.
 rooms without windows, etc.

(ii) A large room divided by a fixed sliding or folding partition is counted as two rooms.

Please write in the No. of rooms in RU →

If there are any rooms you are not sure whether to count, please describe them here and enclose them from top 1 entered in box →

Amenities of the RU
'After the Vacancy'

FOR ALL

Q.21 'After the vacancy', did (does) the suitable unit (RU) have, or have the use of, a

(a) FLUSH TOILET with entrance INSIDE the building?

(b) FLUSH TOILET with entrance OUTSIDE the building?

(c) fixed BATH OR SHOWER with piped water supply?

IF YES (1) Did/does HOT WATER run to the bath/shower?

(d) WASH HAND BASIN with piped water supply?

IF YES (1) Did/does HOT WATER run to the hand basin?

(e) SINK with a piped water supply?

IF YES (1) Did/does HOT WATER run to the sink?

Q.22 Were (are) ANY of these amenities (a)-(e), SHARED with another household's accommodation?

IF YES (1) Please specify here which amenities were (are) SHARED

Q.23 'After the vacancy' did (does) the RU have any CENTRAL HEATING or any NIGHT STORAGE HEATING?

NOTE: 'Central heating' = system where two or more rooms are heated from the same source, eg. boiler or backboiler.

Q.24 'After the vacancy' was (is) there a GARAGE that went (goes) with the RU?

NOTE: (1) Please exclude car-ports.

(ii) 'waste wish' = garage in or near grounds of the building and was, or could be, rented/used by occupiers of the RU.

Please ring number

YES NO DON'T KNOW

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Rooms in the RU
at the Start of the Vacancy

FOR ALL

Q.25 Were all the numbers of rooms and amenities in the RU the SAME at the start of the vacancy as they were after the vacancy?

Yes, all the same before the vacancy 1 Please see Page 10

No, some rooms and/or amenities not the same before the vacancy 2 Please answer Q's 28-31

Don't know if all the same 3 Please answer Q's 28-31 as far as possible

Q.26 At the start of the vacancy, did the rateable unit have, or have the use of, a KITCHEN?

NOTE: 'Kitchen' = any room used for cooking in, unless also used as a bedroom or bed-sitting room

Yes RU had (use of) a kitchen 1 Please ring number

No, RU had no kitchen 2

Don't know 3

Q.27 At the start of the vacancy, how many other ROOMS were there in the rateable unit?

Please see notes at Q.26

Please write in No. of rooms in RU

If don't know, ring X

If there are any rooms you are not sure of, please describe here and exclude them from total entered in box

Amenities of the RU
at the Start of the Vacancy

Q.28 At the start of the vacancy, did the rateable unit (RU) have, or have the use of, a

	Please ring number		DON'T KNOW
	YES	NO	
(a) FLUSH TOILET with entrance INSIDE the building?	1	2	3
(b) FLUSH TOILET with entrance OUTSIDE the building?	1	2	3
(c) fixed BATH OR SHOWER with piped water supply?	1	2	3
IF YES (1) Did HOT WATER run to the bath/shower?	1	2	3
(d) WASH HAND BASIN with piped water supply?	1	2	3
IF YES (1) Did HOT WATER run to the wash hand basin?	1	2	3
(e) SINK with a piped water supply?	1	2	3
IF YES (1) Did HOT WATER run to the sink?	1	2	3

Q.29 Were any of these amenities, (a)-(e), SHARED with another household's accommodation?

IF YES (1) Please specify here which amenities shared

Q.30 At the start of the vacancy, did the RU have a central heating or any other STORAGE HEATING?

NOTE: 'Central heating' = system where two or more rooms, halls or landings are heated from the same source, eg. boiler or back boiler

Q.31 At the start of the vacancy, was there a GARAGE that went with the RU?

NOTES: (1) Please exclude car-ports.
(11) 'went with' = garage in or near grounds of the building and was, or could be, rented/used by occupiers of the RU.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please give the questionnaire to our interviewer as she arranged with you. She will then go on to ask a few more questions about this authority's plans for the rateable unit when it became vacant and about the circumstances that may have affected the length of the vacancy:- in particular any delays or difficulties experienced in either acquiring, selling, letting, demolishing the rateable unit or in having building work or modernisation carried out during the vacancy.

All the information you give will be treated as confidential and will not be passed on to anyone outside OPCS. The results from the survey will be used for statistical purposes only and never presented in such a way that any individual address or authority could be identified.

Social Survey Division (S1109)
Office of Population Censuses and Surveys
St. Catherine's House
10 Kingsway
London WC2B 6JP

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